

# THE PROCEEDINGS Of The South Carolina Historical Association 1983

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Editors

University of South Carolina at Aiken  
The South Carolina Historical Association







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It is the policy of the South Carolina Historical Association to publish all papers presented at the Annual Meeting. The editors of **The Proceedings** disclaim any responsibility for the scholarship, statement of fact and opinion, and the conclusions of the contributors.



# **MINUTES**

## **South Carolina Historical Association Annual Meeting-1983**

The Fifty-third Annual Meeting of the Association met at Newberry College in Newberry, South Carolina, on a rainy Saturday, April 9, 1983. Some one hundred persons were present.

Registration and coffee were held in the lobby of the Science and Mathematics Building followed by two sessions at 10 o'clock. Jamie W. Moore of The Citadel presided over a session on South Carolina. Diane Neal, Central State University, Oklahoma, read a paper, "The 'Agricultural Moses' and the Request for Reform: Agrarian Politics and the South Carolina Gubernatorial Election of 1890." Katherine D. Cann, Spartanburg Methodist College, presented "John G. Richards and the Moral Majority." Robert J. Moore, Columbia College, and Lyon G. Tyler, the Citadel, commented. Mary Ann Stepp, School District of Greenville County, presided over the American session. The two papers were "Charles Boss: Peace Activist" by Joe Dunn, Converse College, and "Nuclear Arms Control: An American Dilemma in Historical Perspective" by Larry H. Addington. Commenting were Douglas Carl Abrams, Bob Jones University, and James Farmer, USC-Lancaster.

Two sessions began at 11:30 A.M. Bobby Moss, Limestone College, presided at a second South Carolina session. Lester Stephens, University of Georgia, presented "The Mermaid Hoax: Scientific Thought and the Charleston Naturalists, 1840-1870," and Rodger Stroup, S. C. Museum Commission, spoke on "The Historical Dilemma: Authenticating S. C. Artifacts." Joseph T. Stukes, Francis Marion College, commented. Clara Gandy, Coker College, presided over the British session. Arthur Mitchell, USC-Salkehatchie, read a paper, "Revolutionary Government in Ireland, 1919-1921." Linda Hayner, Bob Jones University, presented "The Responsibilities of the Church of England for the Parish Poor, 1640-1660." William Brockington, USC-Aiken, and Birdsall Viault, Winthrop College, commented.

The Luncheon meeting convened in Kaufmann Hall. After a delicious buffet the Honorable Thomas H. Pope of Newberry spoke on the career of B. O. Duncan, a Newberry County Reconstruction figure. President Walter Edgar convened the business meeting. The following officers were elected without opposition:

President: Foster Farley, Newberry College

Vice President: A. V. Huff, Jr., Furman University

Secretary-Treasurer: Walter B. Edgar, USC-Columbia.



The 1984 Annual Meeting will be held on March 31, on the Aiken campus of the University of South Carolina in connection with the S. C. Political Science Association.

A. V. Huff, Jr.  
Secretary-Treasurer



## **AGRARIAN REFORM VERSUS BOURBON DEMOCRACY: THE SOUTH CAROLINA GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1890**

**Diane Neal**

Traditionally, historians have portrayed the contest between Redeemer Democrats and insurgent reformers in the South as a class struggle, pitting poor, debt-ridden farmers against planters, merchants, and professionals who were allies of Northern business and financial interests. In a recent article, William J. Cooper departed from both the class conflict thesis and his own earlier interpretation that the real battle in South Carolina was between "generations" rather than classes. Using both quantitative and qualitative methodology, he argued that "race" was the "probable" cause of Benjamin R. Tillman's 1890 gubernatorial victory over Alexander C. Haskell, the standard bearer of ultra Conservative Democrats who refused to accept Tillman's nomination. According to Cooper, "the white people" of South Carolina, responding to Haskell's "open appeal to Negroes" and a threat of renewed black political power, rose to the occasion and elected Tillman to preserve "white supremacy" in the Palmetto State.<sup>1</sup>

Although the denial of class conflict as the basis for Tillman's triumph is plausible, the conclusion that "race" was probably the major factor in the election is doubtful. This explanation not only overemphasizes the significance of rhetoric about the alleged danger to white supremacy, but also ignores Tillman's promises to protect existing black rights as well as the evidence of scattered black support for the Democratic nominee. Although speakers and editors occasionally made references to racial antipathies and the need to insure continued white political dominance in South Carolina, most discussion during the canvass for Democratic convention delegates centered on agricultural issues and Tillman's role as the architect of a movement to oust old leaders and transfer governmental control to the farmers. Even though Haskell and the "Straightout" Democrats who bolted their party after Tillman's nomination appealed to black voters for support, they campaigned on an anti-Tillman platform and not on one promising better conditions for blacks. They believed that Tillman was a dangerous radical who had allied the farmers against the rest of society by using vicious denunciations of and slanderous accusations against governmental officials and party stalwarts.<sup>2</sup>

By these tactics, Tillman forged the farmers of the state into a powerful force capable of wresting control of the Democratic Party from its traditional leaders and the dissenters had only one goal--the defeat of Ben Tillman. Even after the "Straightout" ticket entered the field, most discussion still revolved around agrarian issues and Tillman's indictment of post Reconstruction leaders for their failures to provide solutions for increasing agricultural dislocation. General John J. Bratton, a leading member of the Conservative faction of the Democratic Party opposed to Tillman's nomination, clearly recognized the real issue at stake in 1890 when he declared that the Tillman movement was dangerous because it sought to secure political power for farmers as a class.<sup>3</sup>



Ever since his emergence at Bennettsville in 1885 as an exponent of reform, Tillman devoted himself exclusively to agrarian concerns and all of his criticisms and his suggested remedies were designed to solve pressing agricultural problems. He constantly castigated legislators and other state officials for their failures to take actions to redress agrarian grievances. According to Tillman, even though farmers constituted three fourths of the state's electorate and produced most of its material wealth, lawmakers and other governmental officials stood idly by as South Carolina farmers plunged deeper and deeper into debt. Despite the fact that farmers paid most of the taxes collected by the state, the General Assembly enacted liberal appropriations to educate professionals, but refused to set aside funds for high quality agricultural education. Moreover, even though the state's lien law lay at the root of the farmers' difficulties, the legislature refused to repeal the hated statute.<sup>4</sup>

Tillman was especially vitriolic in his denunciations of Andrew Pickens Butler, state Commissioner of Agriculture, for doing little to aid distressed farmers. Because under existing regulations fertilizers companies could legally mark the quality of their products before packaging, unscrupulous firms could easily defraud farmers. Moreover, even if fraud in the packaging and labeling were proved, the only penalty was confiscation. According to Tillman, Butler and his allies in the state Senate had banded together and defeated bills introduced into the legislature to regulate fertilizer sales more strictly. To make matters worse, the Commissioner had refused to make inspection of fertilizers more extensive by turning down an offer from the South Carolina College to conduct analysis at five dollars per sample, a savings of twenty-five dollars per sample over the cost currently being paid by the state Department of Agriculture. Between 1882 and 1884, the state had spent \$11,739.00 to analyze 457 fertilizer samples when it could have tested over 5 times as many by having the work done by the South Carolina College.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to failing to achieve strict and inexpensive inspection of fertilizers, Tillman lambasted the Commissioner and his department for wasting money on an 1887 agricultural encampment at Spartanburg that was mere "fanfare" offering no benefit other than entertainment. The meager exhibition of livestock and farm implements was "scarcely worth seeing" and no topics of practical value were discussed. The ten thousand dollars wasted on this gathering, contended Tillman, would have financed at least fifteen farmers' institutes that would have been ten times more beneficial than the encampment. The Commissioner had continually demonstrated a lack concern about agrarian problems and Tillman's frequent and harsh criticisms of him were intended either to prod Butler into action or to force his removal from office.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the Farmers' Association, organized by Tillman in 1886 to publicize agrarian grievances and to promote specific reforms, as well as the farmers' movement as a whole, were political in nature from their inception. They had as their goal the obtaining of agrarian reforms through political action. The Farmers'



Association adopted platforms for legislative consideration, lobbied in Columbia for passage of its programs, and authorized Tillman to serve as its spokesman in both the 1886 and the 1888 state election canvasses. It not only delegated Tillman to stump the state on its behalf; it also actively sought to secure the election of legislative and gubernatorial candidates sympathetic to its demands by quizzing prospective officeholders about their stands on agrarian issues. Indeed, it was only after the failure to secure the Democratic gubernatorial nomination for a candidate favorable to its cause in both 1886 and 1888, as well as the repeated refusals of the General Assembly to enact many of its requests into law, that the Farmers' Association turned to Ben Tillman and hoisted his standard for governor.<sup>7</sup>

Of vital concern to farmers was the crop lien system and its accompanying mortgages that were plunging many of them hopelessly into debt. Between 1880 and 1890, mortgages in South Carolina grew precipitously, and the Conservative-dominated state government took no action to ameliorate the hardships associated with them. Tillman had repeatedly implored state officials to take positive action against increasing debts by repealing the state's "damnable" lien law which enticed farmers into debt and placed crop values in the hands of middlemen, and his tirades against the Conservatives struck a responsive chord with the electorate.<sup>8</sup>

Ten of the fifteen leading Tillman counties in the 1890 election ranked among the top fifteen in mortgage increases during the decade of the 1880's (Tables 1 and 3). Significantly, Laurens, the fourth most Tillman county; Abbeville, the sixth strongest Tillman area; and Greenville, the seventh leading Tillman county, ranked second, fifth, and sixth, respectively, in the number of mortgage increases. The more heavily pro-Tillman areas in the state were suffering from increasing economic dislocation and they voted to sustain the candidate who championed relief from ever increasing mortgage obligations, viewed by many farmers as the root of their woes.

Angry and frustrated by the failure of state officials to enact reforms, Tillman ran for governor in 1890 on a purely agrarian platform. He did not engage in race baiting on the stump, nor did he stress nonagrarian issues, and most of his references to racial matters concerned the preservation of existing black rights, limited though they were. He promised to secure justice for all Carolinians regardless of race or economic status; denounced lynching, a point well received by blacks who were the usual victims of mob violence; and advocated the establishment of schools for blacks in every school district in South Carolina.<sup>9</sup>

Because most blacks depended upon agriculture for their livelihood, many were drawn into the Tillman camp. Thousands of black farmers and agricultural laborers throughout the Palmetto State had followed Tillman's agricultural reform movement with great interest from its beginning in 1885. Suffering from the same economic problems as their white counterparts, a sizable minority also viewed him as their "Agricultural Moses." E. J. Dickerson, a black resident of Aiken, echoed



this sentiment, declaring that Tillman was "leading a noble cause . . . [and] if he succeeds the condition of the poor white man would be benefited [sic] and the colored man would be benefited [sic] also." As early as June, 1890, the Shiloh Colored Farmers Alliance in Marlboro County had endorsed Tillman for governor and urged members of both races to vote for him. Moreover, at least two hundred black voters in Lancaster County, encouraged by Tillman's reform program, abandoned the Republican Party and became Tillman Democrats.<sup>10</sup>

Despite some black support and assurances to protect existing meager black rights, many blacks doubtlessly feared that a Tillman victory would endanger their best interests. The Democratic nominee had participated in the 1876 election riots at Hamburg and Ellenton and had manipulated ballots in his home precinct during the same year. Furthermore, the August, 1890 Democratic convention dominated by Tillmanites had adopted a new state constitution that curtailed black political participation more than the previous one had.<sup>11</sup>

However, despite their misgivings about Tillman, blacks had little reason to champion Haskell's candidacy. He had played a very active role in the "Red Shirt" campaign of 1876 that included participation in a white disruption of a black political gathering in Richland County. In addition, he had been a staunch foe of black suffrage and made promises in 1890 no more substantial than those outlined by Tillman. Moreover, it was white Democrats and not blacks who bolted the 1890 Democratic ticket and staged the rump convention with nominated Haskell. Also, the supporters of Haskell who refused to accept Tillman's nomination adopted the same name as the Hampton Democratic ticket in 1876--"Straightout." Thus, since there was no Republican candidate, blacks were offered three choices--they could vote for Tillman, vote for Haskell and a ticket bearing a name they found obnoxious, or abstain from voting.<sup>12</sup>

As the campaign and election results demonstrated, blacks manifested little enthusiasm in 1890. The vast majority of blacks were either apathetic, fearful of white reprisals, or disfranchised by methods perfected after 1876, and they made no attempt to cast ballots on election day. Neither racial group felt threatened enough to make a concerted effort to get out the vote. Both whites and blacks knew that Tillman would win and blacks saw no need to exert a strong effort to vote for a "Straightout" with a strong anti-black record.<sup>13</sup>

In the final analysis, the election of 1890 was a victory for the proponents of agrarian reform who rejected the old leadership that failed to redress very real and pressing economic problems. That Tillman captured the votes of most farmers in the state, regardless of economic status, was not surprising. Ever since his emergence as a champion of agrarian reform in 1885, Ben Tillman had labored industriously to organize South Carolina farmers into a powerful coalition capable of seizing control from Bourbon Democrats in order to secure needed agricultural



reforms. He welcomed all who shared the common occupation of farming to participate in the crusade for reform. The battle was between farmers and the remainder of society since Tillman never pitted planters, small farmers, tenants, or sharecroppers against each other. For him the fight was against all who opposed the reform crusade.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>For comprehensive listings of various assessments of the battles between Redeemers and their antagonists, consult C. Vann Woodward's bibliographic essay in *Origins of the New South*, 2nd. ed. (Baton Rouge, 1971), 528-548; Paul M. Gaston, "The 'New South,'" in Arthur S. Link and Rembert W. Patrick (Eds.), *Writing Southern History: Essays in Historiography in Honor of Fletcher M. Green* (Baton Rouge, 1965), 316-331; and Allen J. Goings, "The Agrarian Revolt," in Link and Patrick (Eds.), *Writing Southern History*, 362-382. The "Generations" thesis is in William J. Cooper, *The Conservative Regime: South Carolina, 1887-1890* (Baltimore, 1968). For his theory about the role of race, see *idem*, "Economics or Race: An Analysis of the Gubernatorial Election of 1890," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, LXXIII (October, 1972), 209-219.

<sup>1</sup>Charleston (S.C.) *News and Courier*, January 23, February 5, March 4, 6, 9-10, 14, 16, 27, 30, May 5, 12, 21, June 4-5, 10-14, 19-20, 26-28, July 2, 4-5, 7, 10, 12, 17, 19-20, 23-27, 30, August 1-2, 6, 23, 26-27, September 12, October 10, 1890; Darlington (S.C.) *News*, February 6, May 15, July 17, 1890; Spartanburg (S.C.) *Carolina Spartan*, February 5, March 12, 26, May 14, June 25, July 9, October 29, 1890; Charleston (S.C.) *World*, February 17, March 27, May 12, June 11, 13-14, 19, 26-28, July 5, 10, 26, September 12, 1890; Orangeburg (S.C.) *Times and Democrat*, March 12, 26, July 16, 1890; Barnwell (S.C.) *People*, March 13, 1890; Rock Hill (S.C.) *Herald*, March 26, July 16, 1890; Anderson (S.C.) *Intelligencer*, June 26, 1890; Aiken (S.C.) *Journal and Review*, July 12, 1890; Horry (S.C.) *Herald*, July 3, 1890; Edgefield (S.C.) *Chronicle*, July 16, 1890; Marlboro (S.C.) *Democrat*, July 18, 1890; J. C. Hemphill to C. S. McCall, May 24, 1890; Wade Hampton to C. S. McCall, July 14, 1890, both in the Charles Spencer McCall Papers, South Caroliniana Library (SCL); E. S. Hammond to W. R. Kelly, July 9, 1890, Edward Spann Hammond Papers, SCL.

<sup>2</sup>Charleston *News and Courier*, June 11-14, 19, 26-27, July 2, 5, 10, 19-20, August 2, 6, 23, 26-27, September 30, October 10, 1890.

<sup>3</sup>For examples of Tillman's open letters on behalf of agrarian reforms, see the following editions of the Charleston *News and Courier*, November 12, 30, December 2, 3, 7, 17, 21, 1885, January 11, 28, May 16, 24, September 28, October 21, 23, 1886, January 6, February 23, May 5, September 16, October 10, 1887, January 26, June 4, 1888.

<sup>4</sup>Charleston *News and Courier*, August 7, November 30, December 1, 3, 7, 9, 17, 1885, January 11, March 9, April 30, September 22, 28, October 4, 7, 16, 21, 23, 25-26, November 2, 12, 17, 22-23, 1886, January 6, February 23, May 5, September 16, November 15, 1887, January 26, July 21, August 3, 1888; Columbia (S.C.) *Register*, August 7, 1885; Edgefield *Chronicle*, August 12, 1885; Orangeburg *Times and Democrat*, December 10, 1885, November 6, 1887; Aiken *Journal and Review*, July 14, 1886; Spartanburg *Carolina Spartan*, November 23, 1887; Benjamin R. Tillman to Luther A. Ransom, November 17, 1885, Benjamin R. Tillman Papers, Clemson University Library (CUL).

<sup>5</sup>Charleston *News and Courier*, September 16, 1887.

<sup>6</sup>Charleston *News and Courier*, April 30, May 1, 24, July 7, 10, November 10-11, 1886, January 26, April 21, July 11, 21, 31, September 22, November 17, 1887, August 4, 29, 1888; Darlington *News*, June 10, 1886; Spartanburg *Carolina Spartan*, July 21, August 4, 1886, April 4, July 18, 1888; Aiken *Journal and Review*, July 25, 1888; Charleston *World*, June 29, August 4-5, 29, 1888; Benjamin R. Tillman to



Charles Crossland, December 31, 1885, April 6, 1886, both in Benjamin R. Tillman Papers, CUL. For accounts of Tillman on the stump, see the *Charleston News and Courier*, August 25, 1886, July 21, 31, August 2-5, 7, 29, 1888; *Rock Hill Herald*, July 29, 1886; *Darlington News*, September 23, 1886; *Aiken Journal and Review*, July 14, 1886; and the *Charleston World*, August 4, 25, 29, 1888. For proceedings of the Tillman summoned convention which organized the Farmers' Association, see the *Charleston News and Courier*, April 29-30, 1886; and the *Columbia Register*, April 29-30, 1886.

<sup>8</sup>For Tillman's assessment of the detrimental aspects of the lien system, see the *Charleston News and Courier*, April 30, 1886, June 20, July 19, 1890.

<sup>9</sup>*Charleston News and Courier*, January 23, March 28, May 5, 12, June 11-14, 19, 26-28, July 2, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19-20, 26-27, 30, August 2, 6, September 12, October 31, 1890; *Spartanburg Carolina Spartan*, February 5, May 14, October 29, 1890; *Charleston World*, March 27, May 12, June 11, 13-14, 19, 26-28, July 5, 10, 26, September 12, November 1, 1890; *Aiken Journal and Review*, July 2, 1890; *Anderson Intelligencer*, June 26, 1890. After Tillman announced that he was seeking the governorship, and long before he had gathered enough delegates to secure the nomination at the state Democratic convention, numerous farmers' clubs and local Democratic organizations controlled by farmers passed resolutions endorsing or demanding his selection. Moreover, although the Farmers' Alliance was officially non-political, over 300 suballiances passed resolutions endorsing Tillman for governor. *Charleston World*, March 5, May 16, 1890; *Charleston News and Courier*, April 12, May 3, June 26, 1890; *Spartanburg Carolina Spartan*, May 7, 1890; *Anderson Intelligencer*, May 8, 1890; *Orangeburg Times and Democrat*, June 4, 1890.

<sup>10</sup>*Charleston News and Courier*, June 27, July 3-4, 7, 9, 17, 26, August 6, September 20, October 6, 1890; Bennettsville (S.C.) *Pee-Dee Alliance*, n.d., as quoted in the *Charleston News and Courier*, June 27, October 30, 1890; *Orangeburg Times and Democrat*, August 13, 1890; *Spartanburg Carolina Spartan*, October 12, 1890; Martin Davis to Benjamin R. Tillman, August 4, 1890; R. W. Pelot to Benjamin R. Tillman, October 6, 1890; Charles Crossland to Benjamin R. Tillman, October 7, 1890, all in Benjamin R. Tillman Papers, CUL. In addition to the endorsement of the Shiloh Suballiance and the support in Lancaster County, at a July meeting two hundred black Republicans in Spartanburg endorsed Tillman and blacks attended several meetings during the canvass for Democratic convention delegates. *Charleston News and Courier*, July 3, 7, 26, 1890.

<sup>11</sup>Benjamin R. Tillman, *The Struggles of 1876 . . .* (n.p., 1909), 17-23, 27, 33-45, 56-67; *Testimony as to the Denial of the Elective Franchise in South Carolina at the election of 1875 and 1876*, 3 vols., Senate Miscellaneous Document no. 48, 44 Cong., 2 sess., I, 3-90, 145-168, 553-555, 594-595, 640-648, 662-670, 695-714, 1050-1069, 1083-1087, II, 248-253, 308-341, 346-347, 351-354, 401-406, 490-498, 523-529, 602-619, III, 215-391; Walter Allen, *Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina: A Chapter of Reconstruction in the Southern States* (New York, 1888), 313-320, 365, 385-387, 416-418; Francis Butler Simkins and Robert H. Woody, *South Carolina During Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, 1932), 505-506, 514-515; Edgefield (S.C.) *Advertiser*, November 5, 1876; *Chicago Tribune*, July 16, September 26-29, 1876; *New York Tribune*, July 18, September 19, 1876; *Charleston News and Courier*, August 2, October 3, 1876; Robert Smalls, "The Massacre at Hamburg, S.C." (pamphlet), July 15, 1876; Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction* (Washington, 1924), 236, 238; Reverend Richard Carroll to Benjamin R. Tillman, October 8, 1890; W. T. Martin to Benjamin R. Tillman, October 22 1890, both in Benjamin R. Tillman Papers CUL; *Charleston World*, September 30, 1890.

<sup>12</sup>Francis Butler Simkins, *The Tillman Movement in South Carolina* (Durham, 1926), 132-133. In 1876, Haskell served as Chairman of the South Carolina Democratic Executive Committee and held the position of Captain of the Richland County Hampton Sabre Club (a rifle club organized as part of the "Red Shirt" campaign approach). *Denial of the Elective Franchise in South Carolina*, III, 508, 563-569; *Charleston News and Courier*, August 17, 1876, September 20, October 6, 10, 1890; *Charleston World*, October 10, 1890.

<sup>13</sup>*Charleston News and Courier*, September 20, October 6, November 5, 1890; *Spartanburg Carolina*



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**Spartan**, October 12, 1890; Anderson **Intelligencer**, November 13, 1890. Voter turnout was only 31 Percent and participation reached levels of 40 percent or better in only 10 of the state's 35 counties (Table 2).

<sup>14</sup>Charleston **News and Courier**, April 29-30, 1886.



TABLE 1

## THE 1890 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN SOUTH CAROLINA

County	Tillman	Haskell	Total
Abbeville	2315 96% ( 6)	109 04% (30)	2424
Aiken	2079 88% (10)	290 12% (26)	2369
Anderson	2043 91% ( 8)	191 09% (28)	2234
Barnwell	2338 85% (16)	404 15% (20)	2742
Beaufort	275 30% (35)	636 70% ( 1)	911
Berkeley	947 38% (34)	1535 62% ( 2)	2482
Charleston	1195 69% (27)	537 31% ( 9)	1732
Chester	1489 86% (15)	245 14% (21)	1734
Chesterfield	1459 87% (11)	218 13% (25)	1677
Clarendon	1145 86% (12)	180 14% (24)	1325
Colleton	1790 73% (23)	666 27% (13)	2456
Darlington	1268 85% (17)	220 15% (19)	1488
Edgefield	3657 98% ( 1)	93 02% (35)	3750
Fairfield	995 56% (31)	771 44% ( 5)	1766
Florence	1237 71% (25)	512 29% (11)	1749
Georgetown	663 67% (29)	331 33% ( 7)	994
Greenville	3399 95% ( 7)	180 05% (29)	3579
Hampton	1548 88% ( 9)	209 12% (27)	1757
Horry	1370 61% (30)	868 49% ( 6)	2238
Kershaw	1388 83% (18)	277 17% (18)	1665
Lancaster	1920 81% (22)	440 19% (14)	2360
Laurens	2062 96% ( 4)	81 04% (32)	2143
Lexington	2187 97% ( 3)	76 03% (33)	2263
Marion	1802 71% (26)	747 29% (10)	2549
Marlboro	1026 86% (14)	168 14% (22)	1194
Newberry	1694 83% (19)	344 17% (17)	2038
Oconee	1314 86% (13)	210 14% (23)	1524
Orangeburg	2923 82% (20)	629 18% (16)	3552
Pickens	1392 97% ( 2)	43 03% (34)	1435
Richland	982 54% (32)	846 46% ( 4)	1828
Spartanburg	2671 82% (21)	588 18% (15)	3259
Sumter	838 53% (33)	749 47% ( 3)	1587
Union	1830 72% (24)	707 28% (12)	2537
Williamsburg	1294 68% (28)	621 32% ( 8)	1915
York	2624 96% ( 5)	107 04% (31)	2731
State	59,159 80%	14,828 20%	73,987

Data Source: South Carolina, **Reports and Resolutions** (1891), I, 604.

Figures in parentheses are the rank each county held in its specific area. For example, Edgefield (1) was the top ranking Tillman county in the state. In ranking the counties, all calculations were carried out five places.

I have omitted the scattered votes cast in Hampton, Lancaster, Lexington, and Newberry counties.



**TABLE 2**  
**SOUTH CAROLINA POTENTIAL ELECTORATE AND**  
**VOTER TURNOUT, 1890**

County	Whites	Blacks	Total	Turnout
Abbeville	3528 37% (25)	6131 63% (11)	9659	2424 25%
Aiken	3141 46% (15)	3664 54% (21)	6805	2369 35%
Anderson	5174 60% ( 3)	3454 40% (28)	8628	2234 26%
Barnwell	3198 36% (26)	5656 64% (10)	8854	2742 31%
Beaufort	749 10% (35)	6388 90% ( 1)	7137	911 13%
Berkeley	1875 15% (34)	10437 85% ( 2)	12312	2482 20%
Charleston	6492 43% (17)	8437 57% (19)	14929	1732 12%
Chester	1975 38% (23)	3251 62% (13)	5226	1734 33%
Chesterfield	2303 63% ( 7)	1336 37% (29)	3639	1677 46%
Clarendon	1561 35% (30)	2959 65% ( 6)	4520	1325 29%
Colleton	2996 36% (27)	5342 64% ( 9)	8338	2456 29%
Darlington	2628 45% (16)	3168 55% (20)	5796	1488 26%
Edgefield	3876 40% (21)	5850 60% (15)	9726	3750 39%
Fairfield	1634 30% (32)	3833 70% ( 4)	5467	1766 32%
Florence	2317 48% (12)	2538 52% (24)	4855	1749 36%
Georgetown	940 22% (33)	3258 78% ( 3)	4198	994 24%
Greenville	5946 65% ( 5)	3180 35% (31)	9126	3579 39%
Hampton	1542 38% (24)	2553 62% (12)	4095	1757 43%
Horry	2748 75% ( 3)	938 25% (33)	3686	2238 61%
Kershaw	1821 43% (19)	2432 57% (17)	4253	1665 39%
Lancaster	2185 53% (10)	1908 47% (26)	4093	2360 58%
Laurens	3046 47% (13)	3460 53% (23)	6506	2143 33%
Lexington	2982 64% ( 6)	1650 36% (30)	4632	2263 49%
Marion	3071 53% ( 9)	2671 47% (27)	5742	2549 44%
Marlboro	2025 43% (18)	2676 57% (18)	4701	1194 25%
Newberry	2084 38% (22)	3384 62% (14)	5468	2038 37%
Oconee	2823 76% ( 2)	879 24% (34)	3702	1524 41%
Orangeburg	3440 35% (29)	6346 65% ( 7)	9786	3552 36%
Pickens	2447 76% ( 1)	753 24% (35)	3200	1435 45%
Richland	3108 36% (28)	5558 64% ( 8)	8666	1828 21%
Spartanburg	7823 69% ( 4)	3485 31% (32)	11308	3259 29%
Sumter	2730 32% (31)	5895 68% ( 5)	8625	1587 18%
Union	2438 47% (14)	2771 53% (22)	5209	2537 49%
Williamsburg	1960 41% (20)	2795 59% (16)	4755	1915 40%
York	4051 51% (11)	3913 49% (25)	7964	2731 34%
State	102,657 44%	132,949 56%	235,606	73,987 31%

Source: *Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890, Part I, Population*, 798-799. These figures pertain to males twenty-one years of age and older and the figures in parentheses reflect the rank of each county in its respective categories. In ranking counties, calculations were carried out five decimal places. Voter turnout figures are from Table 1.



TABLE 3

## MORTGAGE INCREASES, 1880-1889

County	Mortgages, 1880	Mortgages, 1889	Increase
Abbeville	151	443	193% ( 5)
Aiken	110	355	223% ( 3)
Anderson	220	665	202% ( 4)
Barnwell	262	523	100% (19)
Beaufort	49	70	43% (28)
Berkeley	---	220	--- (na)
Charleston	394	344	-13% (33)
Chester	75	160	113% (15)
Chesterfield	75	159	112% (16)
Clarendon	64	174	168% ( 8)
Colleton	133	306	130% (14)
Darlington	245	268	09% (32)
Edgefield	201	494	146% (13)
Fairfield	116	181	56% (27)
Florence	---	62	--- (na)
Georgetown	44	76	73% (24)
Greenville	312	906	190% ( 6)
Hampton	68	196	188% ( 7)
Horry	76	153	101% (18)
Kershaw	183	256	40% (29)
Lancaster	75	269	259% ( 1)
Laurens	97	328	238% ( 2)
Lexington	94	237	152% (11)
Marion	222	293	32% (30)
Marlboro	133	152	14% (31)
Newberry	125	226	81% (21)
Oconee	100	177	77% (22)
Orangeburg	175	431	146% (12)
Pickens	110	191	74% (23)
Richland	164	416	154% (10)
Spartanburg	298	514	72% (25)
Sumter	184	481	161% ( 9)
Union	101	195	93% (20)
Williamsburg	70	144	106% (17)
York	161	256	59% (26)
State	4,888	10,321	111%

Source: Eleventh Census: 1890, Report on Real Estate Mortgages in the United States, 620-625.  
 Figures in parentheses indicate a county's ranking.



## JOHN G. RICHARDS AND THE MORAL MAJORITY

Katherine D. Cann

Citing what appeared to be a general disregard for law enforcement all over the nation, the newly elected South Carolina Governor, John G. Richards, pledged in his 1927 inaugural to dedicate himself to the eradication of lawlessness in South Carolina in all its vile forms. He urged citizens to join with him in "one great purpose ... to place South Carolina upon a pedestal where she can be proclaimed by the world as a leader of righteousness."<sup>1</sup> With these words, Richards became the self-appointed guardian of the morals of South Carolina and began a campaign against vice and immorality which lasted throughout his administration. By 1930, the governor could proudly recite a litany of triumphs in his battle to restore purity and honor to his state. Law enforcement officials had

succeeded in driving out the carnivals that have been operating illegally, and corrupting and obnoxious influences upon which this totally worthless institution was absolutely dependent for its existence. We have driven out the punch boards, the slot machines, and have made vigorous war-fare upon the obscene literature that was on exhibition and for sale at many of the news-stands throughout the state...[W]e have driven out the fortune teller, games of chance, and other open gambling devices that have been permitted in the past, and that have all these years been a great reproach to our state.<sup>2</sup>

Richards' list did not include his successful battle to circumvent the will of the legislature in the matter of liberalizing the blue laws nor his failure to curb violations of the prohibition laws and to secure anti-evolutionary legislation in the General Assembly.

While the rest of the nation assimilated, though not without difficulty, the "revolution in manners and morals" epitomized by the flapper, hip flask, sexy dance and petting party, the south remained aloof.<sup>3</sup> Southerners retained traditional Victorian cultural values based on the belief that moral discipline separated civilized men from savages. Many of them hungered for purity and innocence and refused to acknowledge the presence of evil in their "civilized" society. Because southern Victorians believed that all humans are capable of savagery, they often "placed inordinate stress ... on personal morality" which was the salvation of civilization.<sup>4</sup> Governor John Gardiner Richards was this type of southern Victorian.

Richards' most spectacular success was in putting South Carolina on the proper moral track by purging the state of the most conspicuous forms of gambling. The governor would probably have agreed with the Baptist minister who perceived gambling as "an obstruction to the moral train of God's purpose and plan, tending to disorganize and disarrange the order of the universal laws which prevent chaos in the universe ..."<sup>5</sup> To allow gambling to continue unchecked endangered not only



the moral fabric of South Carolina but threatened the very foundations of civilization.

Though prohibited by law, gambling flourished throughout the state. Carnival games of chance were the most frequently observed gambling activities. Carnivals were also targets for Richards' attacks because the midways sometimes featured "immoral shows or concessions."<sup>6</sup> Hoping once and for all to solve the carnival gambling issue, the 1922 General Assembly adopted a law forbidding "lotteries, slot machines about which there is any element of chance, and all forms of gambling or gambling devices. Carnivals are forbidden, except at ... fairs, provided no games of chance are a part of the carnival."<sup>7</sup>

Enforcement of the gambling statutes was not uniform in the state. The Charleston County grand jury insisted that local authorities continue efforts to "eliminate gambling devices and gaming houses."<sup>8</sup> John Patrick Grace, hoping to enhance his political position, accused the Charleston City government of setting the stage "for organized gambling, bootlegging, and vice ...."<sup>9</sup> Following numerous complaints, Sheriff E. M. White of Greenwood closed all games of chance at the Piedmont Fair. In the same town, the local ministerial association decried carnivals and games of chance because they "lowered the moral tone of the Fair and constituted an assault upon the morals and the religious life of our community."<sup>10</sup> In 1927, the Social Service and Public Morals Committee of the South Carolina Baptist Convention suggested that the General Assembly refuse to appropriate any funds for either the white or colored state fairs "unless the alleged gambling devices along the midway were ... prohibited." However, as the *Charleston News & Courier* sarcastically editorialized, probably "twenty times as much money passes on the Carolina-Clemson game at the State Fair as on all the games of chance together 'along the midway'."<sup>11</sup>

Governor Richards interpreted the gambling laws literally, refusing to make concessions even when carnivals were operated by charitable organizations without games of chance. Attempts by the Woodmen of the World to sponsor carnivals in several towns led the governor to initiate "another crusade for more righteousness--or for less vice, whichever you prefer--to drive all carnivals from the state forever."<sup>12</sup>

In mid-April 1928, local officials and carnival managers defied the orders of state constables sent to Greenville by the Governor ordering the carnival to close down.<sup>13</sup> Managers of the same carnival in Columbia obtained a temporary injunction from a Charleston judge preventing law officers from interfering with the show and opened on schedule. After an Orangeburg judge issued a second injunction cancelling the first one, the Assistant Attorney General raced to the capital to stop the opening. When he finally arrived, the carnival promoters obeyed the injunction and left South Carolina.<sup>14</sup> The furor created by the governor prompted H. L. Watson, editor of the Greenwood *Index-Journal*, to remark that "when our officials get



exercised over old-fashioned crimes like murder then it will be something to remember.”<sup>15</sup>

Slot machines also came under the Governor’s scrutiny. *The News & Courier* dubbed Richards’ latest blitz a “gallant campaign,” but pointed out that the “average South Carolinian is in more peril of being shot in the back than from going to hell for playing a slot machine.”<sup>16</sup> In the summer of 1928, Governor Richards wrote all sheriffs informing them that vending or slot machines “violate the law” and gave notice that henceforth the law would be rigorously enforced and the machines confiscated.<sup>17</sup> There was some confusion over the difference between slot machines and vending machines. Vending machine owners claimed exemption from the law because the machines “gave something in return for the money stuck into the slot.”<sup>18</sup>

For several months, a temporary injunction permitted the operation of slot machines. One city council apologized to its constituents for having to allow the machines in the city and assured them that Richards would secure the arrest of operators when and if the injunction was set aside.<sup>19</sup> In April 1929, after the Supreme Court ruled it had no jurisdiction in the matter, the governor ordered state constables to “proceed vigorously and promptly” to confiscate all slot machines in the state. Within three days, 413 machines had been seized.<sup>20</sup> Several slot machine operators succeeded in obtaining injunctions to prevent confiscation, but invariably, judges cancelled the injunctions and local officials seized the machines.<sup>21</sup> During 1929, the State Attorney General repeatedly offered his opinion that state law prohibited “any mint vending machine, which does not give the same return to every person who deposits a coin ... [The law says] there must be no element of chance about these machines.”<sup>22</sup>

To combat other forms of gambling, Richards dispatched the state constables, charging them with enforcing the state laws which outlawed gambling in any form. Within six weeks of his assignment to Charleston, state constable Richard Johnson reported:

I have succeeded in closing up every policy shop in Charleston. By that I don’t mean to say that policy shops has (sic) ceased to operate, but they are going around the streets and in the back alleys taking plays. We have closed up all gambling houses here ... Our first duty was to close up the lottery shops.

Johnson felt that his authority was undermined when the bond for the first arrest he made for gambling violation was reduced from \$10,000 to \$300. If, according to Johnson, the bond had stayed at \$10,000, “there would [not] have been another vendor left in the city.”<sup>23</sup>

Governor Richards, a “profound and devout church member,” considered his fight against the liberalization of the Sunday closing laws, or blue laws, one of his



most important contributions to South Carolina.<sup>24</sup> In the matter of eliminating gambling, Richards seemed to have the backing of most of the people of South Carolina. That was not the case in his battle against Sunday gasoline, Sunday sports, and Sunday retail sales. Juries often failed to convict persons accused of violating the law; the legislature passed several bills liberalizing the law only to be thwarted by the governor's veto; and the campaign subjected South Carolina to national ridicule.<sup>25</sup>

South Carolina's blue laws date from the 18th century. The 1922 General Assembly modernized the law without making significant changes. The laws set a fine for "tradesman, artificer, workman, laborer, or other person whatsoever" who should "exercise any worldly labor, business or work of their ordinary calling upon the Lord's Day." Other activities prohibited on Sunday included bear-baiting, football, hunting and "other games, exercises, sports, [and] pastimes."<sup>26</sup> In spite of the laws, many businesses opened on Sunday and sold a variety of goods. In the municipalities, such activities were restricted by city ordinances. There were no additional restrictions placed on county establishments. The 1922 law left the matter of enforcement primarily up to local magistrates. Governor Thomas G. McLeod, Richards' predecessor, recognized that "the sentiment of this State is predominately Christian and the population overwhelmingly so," but felt the 1922 law was unrealistic and urged reforms.<sup>27</sup>

Soon after Richards was inaugurated in 1927, the General Assembly began considering a more liberal Sunday closing law.<sup>28</sup> In late February, Governor Richards wrote all state law enforcement officials informing them that "we have all grown more or less careless about Sabbath observance, and the law governing our conduct on that day" and instructing them to enforce the law. In a second communique to county sheriffs, the governor explained that the law did not include drugs, milk, ice, meals in hotels or *bona fide* restaurants, but clearly prohibited all sports activities.<sup>29</sup> Many South Carolinians seemed to agree that the law should either be enforced or amended. Reportedly, the governor's office was "literally swamped" with letters of support for his stance.<sup>30</sup>

On the first "blue Sunday" most South Carolina businesses complied with the law and closed.<sup>31</sup> Otherwise, enforcement was inconsistent. In Aiken, city police did not permit the sale of newspapers, but the sheriff ignored polo games outside the city limits. When Camden hotels announced their intention to comply with the law, a number of out-of-town tourists left town and headed for Pinehurst N. C. where they could play golf and polo unhindered. South Carolina ministers applauded the governor, and merchants in Augusta, Georgia, echoed their sentiments as cars with South Carolina license plates "invaded" their city.

In Greenville and in Aiken, four men were arrested for playing golf. The Greenville golfers paid their fines and went home, but the Aiken four pleaded not guilty. In the subsequent magistrate's trial which lasted about two minutes, a jury found all



defendants not guilty.<sup>33</sup> Governor Richards, undaunted by the verdict, declared that "only a decision by the Supreme Court can stop me" and promised to send his most competent constables to Aiken to make certain that all who dared to disobey the law were arrested. That Saturday, members of the Palmetto and Highland Park Clubs in Aiken obtained an injunction which kept law officers from interfering with the golf game scheduled for the next day. Many Aiken sportsmen were undoubtedly disappointed when the judge who granted the injunction admitted that he would not arrest the governor if his officials defied his order.<sup>34</sup>

In general, after the first Blue Sunday the laws were observed. Conspicuous exceptions were sporting activities in Camden and in Aiken where the injunction was still in effect.<sup>35</sup> Eight golfers were arrested in Camden on the second "blue Sunday." The magistrate's court jury which heard the case deliberated only 4 1/2 minutes before acquitting them.<sup>36</sup> Similar incidents occurred in Sumter and Hartsville. In Florence, an aviator was arrested for giving plane rides.<sup>37</sup>

While magistrate's juries seemed disinclined to convict individuals for playing golf, others in South Carolina nodded their approval of the governor's actions. A Greenwood minister based his sermon on the Blue laws and told his congregation that "Sports and amusements should be regulated so as to protect religious people and not to disturb homes and the well-regulated life of a community."<sup>38</sup>

The media were not so generous toward the governor. **The News and Courier** compared Richards with Mussolini and caustically noted that Aiken "is the place where Sunday golfers are arrested but lynchers are not,"<sup>39</sup> a reference to the notorious Lowman lynching which had never officially been solved. Richards' activities, according to **The Greenville News**, were "unwarranted, autocratic, and dictatorial."<sup>40</sup> Midlands newspapers accused Richards of "willful personal despotism in selecting what laws he will enforce while deliberately neglecting others of at least equal importance."<sup>41</sup> Headlines in the **Atlanta Constitution** proclaimed "A State Goes Wild Again."<sup>42</sup>

State Senators rejected a concurrent resolution which stated that further enforcement of the blue laws would cause "ill will and dissension," and urging the governor to lighten up until the Supreme Court had determined the constitutionality of the law.<sup>43</sup> The Senate received for information several petitions, mostly from the Charleston area, pointing out that the current law was obsolete and desperately needed reform.<sup>44</sup>

On March 18, 1927, the General Assembly finally passed a new Sunday closing law. It prohibited anything which constituted "serious interruptions of the repose and religious liberty of the community" including "noisy or boisterous" sports and amusements. The law allowed the "quiet, orderly" sale of milk, newspapers, medical and surgical supplies, funeral supplies, gasoline, oil, tires, and ice.



Municipalities could enact local ordinances so long as they did not conflict with the state law.<sup>45</sup> Even though the new law passed both houses of the legislature by a substantial majority, Governor Richards, as expected, vetoed the bill.<sup>46</sup> Although the Senate overrode the veto by twenty-three votes, the House upheld the governor and the bill died.<sup>47</sup>

Even the most ardent supporters of the bill recognized that the governor was acting on "high and moral grounds."<sup>48</sup> According to Governor Richards, the new law "strikes a fatal blow at one of the most sacred and fundamental pillars upon which our civilization rests, and, no matter what the purpose be, modifies or amends the Ten Commandments of God." Some of the governor's critics, however, hinted that his campaign against Sunday activities was motivated by a desire to turn public attention from his failure to improve the economy and secure tax reform.<sup>49</sup> The Central Labor Union of Charleston called the laws "inconsistent with the times, and ... detrimental to the state," especially for South Carolina workers who need the time to secure "pleasures ... freedom ... [and] real enjoyments of life."<sup>50</sup> Still others interpreted the blue law campaign as "Bleauseism" and gleefully hoped that Richards' lower class constituents would turn against him.<sup>51</sup>

The South Carolinians who suffered most from the governor's vigorous enforcement of the blue laws were Jewish merchants who, because of their own religious beliefs, closed on Saturday for Sabbath observance. On behalf of a group of Jewish merchants in Charleston, ex-mayor John Patrick Grace asked the governor to consider the situation in which the Jews found themselves. Grace admitted that while he was mayor, the Jewish establishments were permitted to operate, so long as they did so discreetly. Apparently Grace did not expect Governor Richards to make exceptions but reminded him that "it is within the spirit of the American Constitution not to penalize our Jewish friends because they are good enough to worship God in their way while so many of our own people do not worship God at all." Richards replied: "I admire the conviction with which these people observe their faith ... I have no disposition to persecute, or even prosecute them, but as long as the law remains as it is, I must attempt to enforce it."<sup>52</sup>

When the General Assembly convened in 1928, the governor recommended proposals intended to clear up ambiguities in the current law and, in fact, make many more activities illegal.<sup>53</sup> The Supreme Court had already ruled that the current law permitted golf but prohibited gasoline sales, but the legislature seemed to have lost interest in the issue. Once again, flagrant violations prompted Richards to act.<sup>54</sup> The situation was so serious that John L. McLaurin, United States Senator from South Carolina, remarked that "We haven't any Sunday blue laws .... We surely need a vivid call to law enforcement .... I think we need a governor who sets an example of Sabbath observance and good morals, and is willing to fight for it."<sup>55</sup> In March, the General Assembly passed a bill similar to the 1927 bill. When the legislature adjourned on March 11, the bill was on the governor's desk and the issue



unresolved.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, Governor Richards continued his resolute enforcement campaign.

In 1928, the governor reasserted his determination to enforce the blue laws. On orders from the governor, the Charleston County Sheriff arrested participants in car races, motor boat races, and free movies. None of the "law breakers" were found guilty. The governor went about his task with such zest that the **Anderson Mail** remarked

it delights the heart of Governor Richards to enforce his blue laws in any part of the state ... [and] he must take a special delight in making Charleston behave herself on Sundays ... [Charleston] doesn't seem, to want to be saved, and so as the governor makes old Sheriff Poulnot arrest the blue law breakers, Charleston juries turn them a loose, and the game goes on.<sup>57</sup>

True to a promise he had made in December, Governor Richards vetoed the 1928 law, claiming that it would affect the present generation and "extend to generations yet unborn. South Carolina has always respected the Sabbath, and a majority of our people, at least, still revere it as God's Day." He urged the legislature to "sustain the efforts that are being made to defend and enforce laws...to assist in preventing desecration of the holy Sabbath Day. Any attack on these laws...is a direct attack upon the fundamentals of our Christian civilization."<sup>58</sup>

Violation of the prohibition laws was another assault on the fundamentals of Christian civilization. Southerners were justifiably proud of their strong stand in favor of prohibition, and when the amendment went into effect, equally as proud of their expertise in clandestinely manufacturing hootch.<sup>59</sup> For southerners, prohibition became symbolic rather than real. Between 1920 and 1925, according to University of South Carolina Professor W. S. Currell, the "prohibition law collapsed" in South Carolina where it was "publicly violated."<sup>60</sup>

John G. Richards was not the first person determined to keep South Carolina dry. In 1924, Lloyd H. Grandy, newly appointed South Carolina Prohibition Director, promised to "do everything in his power to make this state dry." At that time, the "general condition ... in regard to the whiskey situation was good but there were 'wet spots' and there were conditions that should be improved." That October, prohibition agents destroyed nearly 20,000 gallons of bootleg whiskey and associated spirits worth about \$7,000. Twenty-eight persons were arrested.<sup>61</sup> However, nothing seemed to curb the production and sale of bootleg liquor. In January 1928, having pledged to dedicate himself to the enforcement of all laws, Governor Richards hinted that in the matter of prohibition, imprisonment or a chain gang



sentence were more effective deterrents than a fine, the typical punishment. The Governor also suggested that buying moonshine as well as selling it should be illegal.<sup>62</sup>

Consumption of alcoholic beverages was widespread. William Watts Ball, newly appointed editor of the **News & Courier**, observed in 1926 that

since my arrival in Charleston ... I have been invited to more parties, to cocktail parties, or 'to take a drink' ... I suppose that ... not nearly so much alcohol is consumed by the population as formerly--but under prohibition, the drinking party is common.<sup>63</sup>

Many South Carolinians blamed the high crime rate on the consumption of illegal alcohol. By 1926, things were so desperate that one woman wryly noted "Even our church people seem to have lost their incentive to stand as uncompromisingly against this nefarious traffic as they should."<sup>64</sup> Into this state of affairs burst John G. Richards, ready to save civilization from the demoralizing influences of Demon Rum.

Despite the governor's strenuous efforts to arrest and prosecute violators of the prohibition law, almost daily the newspapers reported raids on stills, seizures of supplies, and confiscations of hootch. After Richards had been in office for nearly two years, the Chief Prohibition Agent in Greenville estimated that 3,000 gallons of whiskey were handled each week in that county. The whiskey supply in Charleston was "adequate" and the price stable at about \$3.00 per gallon. There appeared to be a "steady spread of the liquor habit" in South Carolina, a fact which prohibitionists could not, or would not, acknowledge.<sup>65</sup>

The state's vigor in enforcing the prohibition statutes was hampered by the lack of enthusiasm for enforcement on the part of citizens and public officials. William Watts Ball was "not at all sure [South Carolina] is as 'dry' as the leaders pretend. Outside of the clerical, Richards is perhaps the only conspicuous practicing 'dry' in public life, not counting a few lightweights in office as conspicuous."<sup>66</sup> Often lawbreakers, even second and third offenders, paid relatively small fines.<sup>67</sup>

The **News & Courier**, rarely enthusiastic about anything Governor Richards did, pointed out the governor's failure to combat the liquor menace.

The liquor conditions in this state could scarcely be worse. About 7,000 arrests and prosecutions for violations of prohibition laws are made in the state in a year .... Four out of five violators escape arrest, hence it is conservative to say that from 25,000 to 40,000 of our people are more or less engaged in this outlawed traffic.<sup>68</sup>



If it were true that men of all social classes participated in bootlegging activities<sup>69</sup>, Governor Richards' failure to make a dent in the state's liquor traffic is understandable. Legislative attempts to broaden the state's prohibition laws were also unsuccessful.<sup>70</sup> Even as late as 1930, bootleggers found a steady market for the "usually adequate" amount which they supplied.<sup>71</sup> As he prepared to begin his final year as governor, John G. Richards declared that it was indisputably true that "prohibition law is the most flagrantly and openly violated of all our laws .... That the use and abuse of liquor is the greatest source of crime none will question."<sup>72</sup>

A far more insidious danger to the foundations of society lay in the teaching of radical doctrines to the state's youth. In his 1927 inaugural Richards affirmed "absolute dependence" on God "for wisdom, strength and guidance" and urged the South Carolina legislature to pass laws requiring all public school teachers, including those in state colleges, to profess their belief in God. The people, according to the new governor, "have been very careless in ... this matter."<sup>73</sup> To Richards, evolution was a "dangerous doctrine ... calculated to undermine the religious faith of the students."<sup>74</sup> Believing as did his mentor, Coleman L. Blease, that Christianity and evolution were incompatible, Richards supported anti-evolutionary legislation in the General Assembly. Though bills prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public schools were introduced, none were adopted into law.<sup>75</sup> Emily S. Moorer of Greenwood breathed a sigh of relief when the legislature pigeon-holed an anti-evolution bill in 1927. She believed that "poor debt-ridden South Carolina has no surplus for chasing down unruly Scopeses."<sup>76</sup>

Richards' desire to eliminate evolutionary theory from South Carolina public schools was supported by certain segments of the religious community. A. L. Pickens, a biology professor at Baptist-affiliated Furman University, resigned from his position under pressure when college officials learned that he had acknowledged his belief in evolution during the Scopes Trial.<sup>77</sup> Shortly afterward, Dr. Robert G. Lee of South Carolina helped draft a resolution for the Southern Baptist Convention affirming the convention's "full and unqualified acceptance of the Bible account of creation." Messengers at the convention adopted the resolution with little discussion.<sup>78</sup>

Other South Carolinians disagreed with Richards' stern attempt to force religious conformity upon the people of his state. One conservative Baptist minister, who did not believe in evolution himself, pleaded with his congregation for a "Christian attitude" toward "those who differ about matters which are not vital to the reality of the Christian religion and the salvation of the Soul."<sup>79</sup> Even the South Carolina Baptist Convention proclaimed that it was the state's

business to protect, not promote religious matter .... The State cannot show partiality ... [O]ur children must have religious training, but they must get it at home, in the church



and denominational schools, and not at the expense of those who do not believe it.<sup>80</sup>

Richards remained undeterred. Having learned from his daughter, a student at Winthrop College, that a sociology professor at the college was teaching evolution, Richards, an ex-officio member of the college Board of Trustees, "led the fight" to have him removed from his position. William Garner Burgin, the professor in question, had been teaching at Winthrop for five years. Because he was apparently a popular teacher, several students petitioned the board to retain him. The board opposed Burgin's public support for evolution and his opinions on a variety of other social issues.<sup>81</sup> According to Burgin, the trustees, including Leroy Springs, president of Springs Mills, objected to his vehement condemnation of child labor in South Carolina textile mills. To Burgin, the issue was "the principle of freedom of teaching" rather than evolution. At the governor's insistence, the Board of Trustees discussed Professor Burgin's "crimes" in executive session, dubbed by the **Greenville News** a "Star Chamber." The eight trustees present were equally divided on whether or not to dismiss Burgin, giving the Governor the power to cast the deciding vote. Burgin was fired. A trustee who had supported Burgin called the board meeting a "high-handed act ... thoroughly opposed to all principles of democracy, fairness, and justice."<sup>82</sup> As in the case of the blue laws, the governor went to extraordinary lengths to make his point.

During the 1920s, the south was a bastion of conservatism. Over sixty-one percent of adults were church members; three-fourths of them were Methodists or Baptists.<sup>83</sup> The largely rural population had "profound respect for work, and [were] likely to look on play as trifling or even sinful."<sup>84</sup> In South Carolina, "nice ladies" protested public displays of flesh clad in bathing suits.<sup>85</sup> Concerned citizens urged passage of laws to regulate motion pictures which might rob children of their innocence.<sup>86</sup> City ordinances prohibited public dances and levied fines for kissing in a parked car.<sup>87</sup> Governor Richards was not out of step with his time. His sincere belief in God and the strong religious bias which he brought with him to the governor's office led him to abhor evil and immorality and influenced all his actions. However, no matter how hard he tried, Richards failed to generate genuine sympathy for his position. As a contemporary remarked, "The trouble with Governor Richards is that he takes himself too seriously and that he has no sense of humor. If the Governor could only see the ridiculous and absurd in things it would be a wonderful step forward."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives of South Carolina, 1927, p.87.

<sup>2</sup>"Annual Message of John G. Richards to the General Assembly," in **Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of South Carolina**, 1930, pt. II, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick Lewis Allen, **Only Yesterday** (New York: Bantam Books, 1931), pp. 61-66.



<sup>4</sup>Daniel Joseph Singal, "The Development of Modernism: Intellectual Life in the South, 1919-1941" (Unpublished PhD dissertation: Columbia University, 1976).

<sup>5</sup>**The Index-Journal** (Greenwood, S. C.), 16 November 1925.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 19 October 1920.

<sup>7</sup>"Report of the Attorney General," in **Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of South Carolina**, 1930, pt. I, p. 87; **Index-Journal**, 14 June 1925

<sup>8</sup>**Index-Journal**, 27 September 1922.

<sup>9</sup>John Patrick Grace to John G. Richards, 12 September 1927, John Patrick Grace Papers, Duke University.

<sup>10</sup>**Index-Journal**, 21 November 1925.

<sup>11</sup>**News and Courier** (Charleston, S. C.), 11 December 1927.

<sup>12</sup>**The Yorkville Enquirer** (S. C.) 6 April 1928; **Index-Journal**, April 1928.

<sup>13</sup>**The Greenville News** (S. C.), 2 April 1928.

<sup>14</sup>**Yorkville Enquirer**, 6 April 1928.

<sup>15</sup>**Index-Journal**, 6 April 1928.

<sup>16</sup>**News and Courier**, 18 June 1928.

<sup>17</sup>**Index-Journal**, 2 June 1928.

<sup>18</sup>**Yorkville Enquirer**, 22 June 1928; **Index-Journal**, 15 July 1928.

<sup>19</sup>**Index-Journal**, 29 July 1928.

<sup>20</sup>**Index-Journal**, 30 April 1928; 4 May 1929.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 5 July 1929; 31 August 1929.

<sup>22</sup>"Report of the Attorney General," in **Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of South Carolina**, 1930, pt. I, p. 125.

<sup>23</sup>John Patrick Grace to John G. Richards, 12 September 1927, Grace Papers, Duke University.

<sup>24</sup>Mary James Richards, "Sketches and Records of the J. G. Richards Family" (mss), n.d., n.p., South Caroliniana Library.

<sup>25</sup>**The New York Times**, 23 March 1927; **The Baltimore Sun**, 11 March 1927; **The Richmond Times-Dispatch**, 30 March 1927.

<sup>26</sup>**Index-Journal**, 20 February 1927; William Sheldon Millett, "Never on Sunday-Blue Laws in South Carolina" (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1970), pp. 9-10.

<sup>27</sup>**Journal of the House of Representatives of South Carolina**, 1925, p. 76; **Index-Journal**, 19 March 1927; 4 April 1924.

<sup>28</sup>**Journal of the Senate of South Carolina**, 1926, pp. 296, 349, 899; 1927, p. 1063.



<sup>29</sup>**The State** (Columbia, S. C.), 25 February 1927; **Index-Journal**, 23 February 1927.

<sup>30</sup>**The State** 28 February 1927; 25 February 1927; **Index-Journal**, 28 February 1927; 22 February 1927; 23 February 1927.

<sup>31</sup>**Index-Journal**, 27 February 1927.

<sup>32</sup>**The Camden Chronicle** (S. C.) 4 March 1927; **State**, 28 February 1927; **New York Times**, 28 February 1927.

<sup>33</sup>**The Greenville News** (S. C.) 28 February 1927; 1 March 1927; **State**, 28 February 1927.

<sup>34</sup>**New York Times**, 2 March 1927; **Index-Journal**, 5 March 1927; 6 March 1927.

<sup>35</sup>**New York Times**, 7 March 1927.

<sup>36</sup>**Camden Chronicle**, 18 March 1927.

<sup>37</sup>**Camden Chronicle**, 25 March 1927; **News and Courier**, 15 March 1927; **Florence Morning Review**, 1 March 1927.

<sup>38</sup>**Index-Journal**, 7 March 1927.

<sup>39</sup>**News and Courier**, 1 March 1927; 28 February 1927.

<sup>40</sup>**Greenville News**, 24 February 1927.

<sup>41</sup>**Newberry Observer** (S. C.), 25 March 1927.

<sup>42</sup>**Camden Chronicle**, 11 March 1927.

<sup>43</sup>**Index-Journal**, 16 March 1927.

<sup>44</sup>**Journal of the Senate of South Carolina**, 1927, pp. 719, 752.

<sup>45</sup>**Index-Journal**, 19 March 1927.

<sup>46</sup>**New York Times**, 22 March 1927.

<sup>47</sup>**Journal of the Senate of South Carolina**, 1927, p. 1063; **New York Times**, 24 March 1927.

<sup>48</sup>**Journal of the Senate of South Carolina**, 1927, p. 1063.

<sup>49</sup>**New York Times**, 23 March 1927.

<sup>50</sup>**News and Courier**, 14 March 1927.

<sup>51</sup>W. W. Ball to Robert Lathan, 23 March 1927; John G. Richards to John P. Grace, 28 March 1927, Grace Papers, Duke University.

<sup>52</sup>John P. Grace to John G. Richards, 24 March 1927; John G. Richards to John P. Grace, 28 March 1927, Grace Papers, Duke University.

<sup>53</sup>**Yorkville Enquirer**, 13 January 1928.

<sup>54</sup>**Yorkville Enquirer**, 27 January 1928; 21 February 1928; Millett, pp. 43-44.



<sup>55</sup>*Yorkville Enquirer*, 6 March 1928.

<sup>56</sup>*Index-Journal*, 11 March 1928.

<sup>57</sup>*News and Courier*, 12 April 1928; *Yorkville Enquirer*, 22 June 1928.

<sup>58</sup>*Journal of the Senate of South Carolina*, 1929, pp. 29-30.

<sup>59</sup>George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1967), pp. 220-221.

<sup>60</sup>Minutes of the Kosmos Club, Vol. III, 8 December 1928, South Caroliniana Library.

<sup>61</sup>*Index-Journal*, 26 March 1924; 4 November 1924.

<sup>62</sup>*Journal of the House of Representatives of South Carolina*, 1928, p. 31.

<sup>63</sup>Diary of W. W. Ball, 15 October 1926, Ball Papers, Duke University.

<sup>64</sup>*South Carolina Gazette*, 19 May 1926, Clipping in Walter E. and Bessie Duncan papers, South Caroliniana Library.

<sup>65</sup>T. R. Waring to Clark Warburton, 19 July 1930, T. R. Waring Papers, South Carolina Historical Society; W. W. Ball to J. C. Devieux, 25 October 1928, Ball Papers, Duke University.

<sup>66</sup>W. W. Ball to James A. Hoyt, 6 April 1928, Ball Papers, Duke University.

<sup>67</sup>*Index Journal*, 9 July 1922; 11 May 1925.

<sup>68</sup>W. W. Ball to T. F. McDow, 12 October 1929, Ball Papers, Duke University.

<sup>69</sup>Kosmos Club, W. W. Ball (mss) in Vol. III, 15 March 1930, South Caroliniana Library; John P. Grace to John G. Richards, 12 September 1927, Grace Papers, Duke University.

<sup>70</sup>*Journal of the Senate of South Carolina*, 1929, p.1308.

<sup>71</sup>T. R. Waring to Clark Warburton, 19 July 1930, Waring Papers, South Carolina Historical Society.

<sup>72</sup>"Annual Message of John G. Richards to the General Assembly," in *Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of South Carolina*, 1930, pt. II, p. 21.

<sup>73</sup>*Journal of the House of Representatives of South Carolina*, 1927, pp. 76, 80.

<sup>74</sup>*Index-Journal*, 9 June 1927.

<sup>75</sup>*Journal of the House of Representatives of South Carolina*, 1927, pp. 1128, 1757.

<sup>76</sup>*Index-Journal*, 26 January 1927.

<sup>77</sup>*The Greenville Piedmont* (S. C.), 1 May 1926.

<sup>78</sup>*Index-Journal*, 2 May 1926; 12 May 1926.

<sup>79</sup>*Index-Journal*, 21 July 1925.

<sup>80</sup>*Journal of the Senate of South Carolina*, 1929, p. 215.



<sup>81</sup>**Index-Journal**, 9 June 1927; Charles F. McClure, Jr. "The Public Career of John G. Richards" (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1976, p. 44.

<sup>82</sup>**Index-Journal**, 29 June 1927; 22 June 1927; 10 July 1927, McClure, p. 45.

<sup>83</sup>Tindall, pp. 196-197.

<sup>84</sup>G. Croft Williams, **Social Problems in South Carolina** (Columbia: The State Co., 1928), p. 49.

<sup>85</sup>**Index-Journal**, 14 May 25.

<sup>86</sup>**Journal of the Senate of South Carolina**, 1927, p. 386; **Index-Journal**, 6 March 1925.

<sup>87</sup>**Index-Journal**, 4 March 1927; 17 April 1925.

<sup>88</sup>**Index-Journal**, 22 March 1928.



## **CHARLES F. BOSS, JR., THE METHODIST COMMISSION ON WORLD PEACE, AND THE ANTI-CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGNS, 1940-1948**

**Joe P. Dunn**

World War II was a major watershed in Protestant political activity. During the war and in the immediate postwar years, most major denominations opened some form of representation in the nation's capital. Overt political lobbying became more acceptable, and new political concerns emerged. Few issues, if any, inspired more concern among church leaders than the question of peacetime compulsory military service. Protestant leaders were in the forefront of the anti-conscription campaigns of the 1940's and 1950's. The Methodist Church was the most active non-pacifist denomination, and Charles F. Boss, Jr., of the Methodist Commission on World Peace was the denomination's foremost spokesmen.

Although overly idealistic, politically naive, and most sanguine concerning foreign military threats, Boss reflected a moral conscience which served an important function in the conscription debates. It is easy today to fault his analysis and belittle his contribution; but this is not entirely fair. In any case, Boss represented a genre of church leaders with a vision and faith in a better world, and his involvement affords a case study of Protestant activity during the era.

Boss was born in 1888 in Washington, D. C. As a young man he held several Methodist Episcopal pastorates in Maryland and served in various religious education leadership positions. In 1936, he was elected Executive Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Commission on World Peace and dominated the body for more than two decades. He was instrumental in bringing European Methodist leaders together to discuss international issues and served as leader at the World Conferences of Christian Youth in Amsterdam during 1939 and 1947.

In his early years, Boss fervently supported the League of Nations, and international organization became a life-time passion. During World War II he was active in postwar planning, serving on the Federal Council of Churches' Commission on a Just and Durable Peace and the Commission of International Justice and Goodwill. As an accredited observer at the United Nations Conference at San Francisco in 1945, Boss established personal headquarters, sent weekly letters and progress reports to Methodist leaders, and wrote a series on the conference for the Religious News Service. In 1953 he founded a Methodist office at the UN located in the Carnegie Peace Center. In 1957 he resigned as General Secretary of the Board of World Peace to become the Board's Secretary for United Nations and Intergovernmental Affairs. Throughout his career, Boss conducted seminars and engaged in other activities to support the UN. He retired in 1960 and died in 1965. In recognition for his lifelong efforts, the Boss Room in the Church Center for the United Nations was named in his honor.<sup>1</sup>

Conscription became a concern of the churches during the summer of 1940 as Congress considered the first peacetime draft in American history--the Selective



Training and Service Act, or Burke Wadsworth Bill. The draft lobby included the military services, American Legion, National Guard Association, other veterans and patriotic groups, the National Association of Manufacturers, Junior Chamber of Congress, and other civic organizations. Opponents came from farm, labor, and education associations; civil rights groups; the large pacifist coalition; and the churches. The pacifist Friends, Mennonites, and Brethren were the most active; however, the Congregational and Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Federal Council of Churches, National Catholic Welfare Conference, and Methodists also lobbied against the bill. Their respective periodicals adopted anti-conscription editorial policies as did the influential voice of liberal inter-denominational Protestantism, **The Christian Century**. The Methodist's **Christian Advocate** and **Zion's Herald** consistently attacked the bill.

In the Congressional hearings, Boss spoke for the newly united Methodist Church whose eight million members made it the largest single Protestant denomination. He read from a recent pronouncement of the general conference, the denomination's highest authoritative body, which declared that the Methodist Church "will not officially endorse, support, or participate in war." The statement of the Commission on World Peace, passed the previous week, was more emphatic and overdrawn:

Military conscription at this time is not essential to national defense. As drafted, this bill strikes at civil and religious liberty, disrupts social and economic life, places vast power in the hands of a very few men, and moves surely, if not immediately, in the direction of dictatorship.<sup>2</sup>

Continuing, Boss denounced the trend toward regimentation of American society and dismissed German Nazism as an immediate military threat. He argued that conscription proponents were exploiting the tense situation to achieve a long sought objective. He characterized the draft as "a move in the direction of dictatorship in this country. It aims at totalitarianism and Hitlerism." "Adopting the tactics of the Nazi state," he exclaimed, was not the way to defend freedom. Finally, Boss charged that the draft would fall chiefly upon the unemployed and low income groups and might even be utilized as "the means of repressing the growing dissatisfaction of underprivileged and unemployed persons." Boss's testimony typified the pacifism and non-interventionism which remained strong among Protestant leadership. These leaders disclaimed the possibility of war, considered preparedness aggressive, and deemed conscription an apocalyptic disaster.<sup>3</sup>

Since the bill's opponents expected it to pass, Boss and other church spokesmen simultaneously lobbied for provisions for conscientious objectors on par with those contained in the British conscription law. Modifications in the original Burke-Wadsworth bill granted stronger protection for COs, allowing their participation in an alternate service program rather than the armed forces.



In late 1939 representatives of the Friends, Mennonites, and Brethren met with President Roosevelt and military officials to devise a program providing "work of national importance under civilian direction" to those "who for reason of religious training and belief were conscientiously opposed to participation in any form of war even in non-combatant status." With the passage of the selective service act, this Civilian Public Service (CPS) program commenced. According to their agreement with the government, the pacifist churches assumed the complete financial burden of the program and most of the administrative tasks in conformance with federal directives. The pacifists created a National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) to direct CPS.

Boss participated in several of the pacifist-government conferences as the role and mechanics of CPS were negotiated. The Commission on World Peace was the only non-historic pacifist group represented on the original NSBRO, and Boss remained active in the agency throughout the war. In a 1944 memorandum, he reported that 600 of the 7,000 men in CPS were Methodist. Methodists outnumbered Quakers in the program. The Commission on World Peace administered two projects: 26 men at the State Mental Hospital at Cherokee, Iowa; and 46 participants at Duke University Hospital.

Although the draft was generally accepted during the war, a new conscription issue emerged which promised a major postwar confrontation. In April 1943, Roosevelt advocated a postwar youth training program. In January 1944, the chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee introduced a bill proposing a year of universal military training (UMT) for all seventeen year old males. Numerous military spokesmen, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the National Chamber of Commerce, and Eleanor Roosevelt endorsed UMT during the year. The President's State of the Union address in January 1945, proclaimed UMT "essential." During the following months, attempts to authorize special drafts to acquire nurses and labor for war industries failed but raised the specter of universal conscription among opponents.<sup>6</sup>

In June 1945, a House Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy convened to hear testimony concerning a universal military training obligation. More than 150 witnesses appeared, and over 100 written statements were appended to the hearings' record. Spokesmen from most Protestant denominations testified and denounced UMT or at least asked that any decision be postponed until the end of the war.

The Methodist Church did not appear officially, although a spokesman for the National Conference of the Methodist Youth Fellowship testified. Boss was attending the San Francisco Conference and apparently did not request an appearance date until too late. Failing to get on the agenda, he asked that the Federal Council speak on behalf of the Methodists, and he summarized his denomination's position in a letter to the committee. In the letter, Boss reported that the General Conference and five of its constituent bodies--the Council of Bishops, the Association of



Methodist Colleges and Universities, the Women's Division of the Board of Missions, the National Conference of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, and the Commission on World Peace--all were on record either against UMT or for postponing the decision. He concluded that UMT hearings at this time would force the churches to divide their efforts between opposing universal training and the paramount task of the hour, educating the American people about the new UN Charter.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the House Military Affairs Committee scheduled hearings on a UMT bill in November and December. Unlike the preceding hearings, church spokesmen did not turn out in force. Only the Federal Council, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Mennonite Central Committee, and the Commission on World Peace testified. Boss's statement echoed the sentiments of the pacifist representatives. He reiterated Methodist opposition to any form of compulsory peacetime military training, and he affirmed complete faith in the UN to keep world peace and to achieve arms control. Queried about Soviet aggressiveness, Boss responded that the key to Soviet relations was to maintain faith in the Russians. He believed that they would withdraw from Korea and China and would live up to existing agreements. Finally, he endorsed two Congressional proposals to seek international abolition of conscription before the United States proceeded with unilateral conscription.<sup>8</sup>

The UMT bill died in committee in early 1946, and Congress turned its attention from universal training to selective service. A limited draft offended many churchmen less than did UMT. However, pacifists regarded the distinction as minor, and other church spokesmen considered any compulsory peacetime service wrong regardless of the numbers affected. Yet, only the three pacifist denominations, the Southern Baptists, and the Commission on World Peace testified in the 1946 draft hearings.

For the pacifist, non-violence was an article of faith dictated by conscience, even if the short run consequences might be disastrous to individual or nation. Boss's situation was more complex. Although he was a pacifist, he represented a non-pacifist constituency. He could not merely invoke pacifist ideals; his arguments had to be "practical." In hindsight, however, Boss's logic was anything but practical. Three dubious assumptions underlay his testimony against the draft: (1) ". . . it is our judgement that war is certainly not a threat in the near future." (2) The UN rather than unilateral national power was the key to peace. As Boss explained, ". . . future emergencies will be met only by the use of force under international law administered by the United Nations." The United States occupation role should be assumed by the UN which would determine the size and role of American forces stationed abroad. (3) The atomic bomb rendered large armies obsolete. This was an interesting conclusion for Boss and other churchmen who had so vigorously condemned the bomb and implored that its employment never be contemplated again.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, Boss attempted to distinguish between the "men of low character,



limited education, and unacquaintance with the foundations of democracy" who would be drafted into military and the high caliber individuals needed for international police duties assigned by the UN. Boss implied that the latter could be acquired only through voluntary enlistment. Again he appeared untroubled by inconsistency. In the UMT hearings the previous year, he feared subjecting innocent youth to the moral evils of the professional military. Now he wished to protect the military from these same "low character" youth.<sup>10</sup>

Selective service gained a one year extension in 1946 and the UMT campaign revived. Several important events occurred in the next two years: (1) the Army created an "experimental" UMT unit at Ft. Knox, Kentucky;<sup>11</sup> (2) a Presidential Advisory Commission on Universal Training proclaimed UMT "vital"; (3) declarations from most major Protestant denominations emphatically reaffirmed their opposition to UMT; and (4) the National Council Against Conscription and its periodical **Conscription News**, both run by young Methodist minister John M. Swomley, Jr., emerged as a prominent force in the anti-conscription coalition.<sup>12</sup>

By 1948 UMT adoption appeared likely. The Czechoslovakian coup in February intensified American fears of Communist expansion. In March, President Truman asked Congress for the European Recovery Program, temporary revival of the draft which had lapsed in 1947, and UMT. Senate hearings on UMT began in late March. Congressional opposition was less evident. As one scholar explains: "The 1945-47 alliance of left and right in opposition to 'militaristic conscription' came apart in 1948 as most conservatives found it more important to be anti-Soviet than anti-military."<sup>13</sup>

The 1948 Senate hearings were the highpoint of the UMT battles. Hundreds of individuals and organizations from all elements of American society testified. The churches were heavily represented. As usual, Charles Boss spoke for the Methodists and reiterated his perennial themes: rejection of unilateral military strength and unmitigated faith in the United Nations. He outlined an eight point program which proposed extending the Marshall Plan to Eastern Europe, a United States sponsored world disarmament effort, international abolition of conscription under the UN framework, and greater exchange of religious, educational, scientific, artistic, business, and labor leaders between the United States and Soviet Union. Boss criticized American intransigence toward the Soviets and accused Truman of rejecting opportunities to meet with Stalin. Exhibiting his idealistic faith in discussion and consensus, Boss challenged the President to send two plenipotentiaries to Russia "to sit down with Stalin and come to grips with problems that cannot be solved by name calling and saber rattling." Boss appeared blind to the fact that the Soviets evidenced little desire to negotiate and compromise.<sup>14</sup>

Boss was not atypical. Most church spokesmen shared his zeal for accord with the Soviets. Congress tended to be more skeptical. The Senators granted church spokesmen utmost respect but little credence. They asked few questions and seldom



contested even the weakest assertions. The slightest hint of discourtesy to church leaders was not prudent politics. When legislators did press, they often received rather feeble responses. During an oration by George Harper, Secretary of the National Conference of Methodist Youth, Senator Raymond Baldwin posed a few specific questions concerning Soviet actions and postulated several scenarios for the speaker to consider. Harper dodged the questions and finally refused to respond. This inability to speak to contemporary realities epitomized the weakness of much church testimony.<sup>15</sup>

Even at the peak of the Cold War, UMT failed as the Senate Armed Services Committee refused to report the bill out of committee. Several factors doomed UMT in 1948. Labor and the educational community remained formidable foes. Southern support faded when the original bill was amended to require desegregated UMT units. But most important was the emerging "Air Power" panacea advocated by its proponents as the alternative to the expense and problems of large standing armies. Even military solidarity disintegrated when the question boiled down to the economic choice of a larger Air Force or UMT.<sup>16</sup>

Although UMT failed, selective service was extended and would be renewed periodically for the next 25 years. Boss testified against the 1948 extension but found congress less accommodating than in the past. One Congressman asked Boss if he now recognized the error of his sanguine views and opposition to the 1940 draft only months before the outbreak of World War II. Boss responded only that the situation was entirely different. Speaking only two years before Korea, he assured Congress that the likelihood of war in the foreseeable future was quite remote.<sup>17</sup>

Conscription remained a major political issue for the next two decades. Truman continued to campaign for UMT, but the Korean War interrupted another legislative effort in 1950. Extensive hearings on a UMT bill were held in 1952, but the proposal again died in committee. President Eisenhower took up the UMT campaign, but 1952 marked the last major UMT hearings. Congress debated a National Reserve Plan in 1955 which opponents labeled a step toward UMT; however, the actual conscription law passed had no resemblance to universal training. The late fifties brought a lull in the long conscription furor before the controversy reached new heights of emotion in the sixties. By this time Boss was no longer a participant.

The anti-conscription campaigns were one of Boss's most sustained commitments of his long career. It is difficult, however, to evaluate his performance; his record is mixed. His idealistic anti-preparedness stance in 1940 and the late forties was naive; but it can be argued that it reflected a healthy balance against the cynical Cold War psychosis which dominated the era. His view of the Soviet Union was overly generous, but that of policy makers of the day may have been inordinately fearful and inflexible. If his apocalyptic vision of UMT was exaggerated, some of his admonitions merited consideration. One assessment may be justified. As well as any other spokesman, Charles Boss epitomized the strengths and weaknesses, glories and follies, successes and failures, of the church voice in the postwar political arena.



<sup>1</sup>Nolan Harmon, ed., *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), pp. 302-303; Robert Paul Lisensky, "Methodism as an Initiator of Social Thought and action in the Area of World Peace, 1900-1956," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1960, pp. 137-139; and Bonnie Salango, "The Methodist Foreign Policy Response," Unpublished Ph.D., dissertation, School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, 1970, pp. 278-282.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Military Affairs, *Selective Compulsory Military Training and Service* (76th Cong., 3rd sess., 1940), p. 421.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 422-423.

<sup>4</sup>An extensive literature exists on the CPS experience. The best studies are Philip E. Jacob, *The Origins of Civilian Public Service* (Washington: National Service Board for Religious Objectors, 1946) and Mulford Q. Sibley and Philip E. Jacob, *Conscription of Conscience: The American State and the Conscientious Objector, 1940-1947* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952). Also see E. Raymond Wilson, "Evolution of the C.O. Provisions in the 1940 Conscription Bill," *Journal of Quaker History* 65 #1 (Spring 1975), pp. 3-15.

<sup>5</sup>Charles F. Boss, Jr., "Factual Statement on Civilian Public Service," memorandum, no specific date, 1944, Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. A 1946 report states that at one time there were 850 Methodists in CPS camps. Methodists constituted the largest segment of members outside the pacifist churches. See Lisensky, "Methodism," pp. 67, 137.

<sup>6</sup>For fuller development, see John J. O'Sullivan, "From Voluntarism to Conscription: Congress and Selective Service, 1940-1945," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1967, pp. 137-140.

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, *Universal Military Training* (79th Cong., 1st sess., 1945), Part II, p. 646.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Military Affairs, *Universal Military Training* (79th Cong., 2nd sess., 1946), pp. 507-525.

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, *Selective Service Extension* (79th cong., 2nd sess., 1946), pp. 193-197.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>11</sup>Two Methodist ministers independently exposed the "experiment" as a carefully orchestrated plan, using highly selected personnel and massive publicity, to propagate UMT. See editorials by John M. Swomley, Jr., *Conscription News*, May 8, 15, 22, 29, 1947; and Alexander Stewart, "Is UM Tee the Answer?" *The Christian Century* (May 28, 1947), pp. 680-682. A Congressional subcommittee investigated the unit and found the Army guilty of improper use of government funds as well as other violations of procedure and practice. See U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Publicity and Propaganda Subcommittee, *Investigation of War Department Publicity and Propaganda in Relation to Universal Military Training* (80th Cong., 1st sess., 1947), House Report #1073.

<sup>12</sup>For fuller development, see Joe P. Dunn, "The Church and the Cold War: Protestants and Conscription, 1940-1955," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, 1973, pp. 90-92, 103-118; and John M. Swomley, Jr., "A Study of the Universal Military Training Campaign, 1944-1952," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1959.

<sup>13</sup>James M. Gerhardt, *The Draft and Public Policy: Issues in Manpower Procurement, 1945-1970* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), p. 90.



<sup>14</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, **Universal Military Training** (80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948), pp. 522-528.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 1040-1052.

<sup>16</sup>Gerhardt, **The Draft and Public Policy**, pp. 91-104.

<sup>17</sup>U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, **Selective Service** (80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948), pp. 6569-6581.



## NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ARMS CONTROL: THE SALT EXPERIENCE

Larry H. Addington

By the mid-1960's, Robert S. McNamara, U.S. Secretary of Defense, had concluded that the Soviet-American strategic arms race had reached the point of diminishing returns. He believed that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union could effectively defend itself from attack by such weapons, and that more such weapons would in no way add to the security of either country. As long as each country had a survivable number of strategic weapons to mount a devastating counter-attack in retaliation for a preemptive assault, more such weapons were as unnecessary as they were costly. McNamara's reasoning eventually evolved into the official doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), and was the underlying assumption when President Lyndon B. Johnson proposed strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) to the USSR in 1967.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet government of Chairman Leonid Brezhnev responded favorably to Johnson's overtures, but before arrangements could be completed for SALT negotiations Soviet and other Warsaw Pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia in August, 1968, in order to suppress the liberalizing Communist government of Alexander Dubcek. U.S. public reaction was so hostile to this repression that Johnson felt compelled to abandon his plans to negotiate with the Soviet Union on strategic arms. Not for the last time, the factor later called "linkage" (or the influence of unrelated events and issues) had a negative effect on bilateral strategic arms negotiations.<sup>2</sup>

But the attraction of the idea of SALT negotiations did not die in either Washington or Moscow, and on the day that Richard M. Nixon was inaugurated as Johnson's successor in the White House in January, 1969, the Soviet government expressed its willingness to take up the matter again. This time Washington responded favorably, and finally on November 17, 1969, Soviet and American delegations held their first SALT meeting at Helsinki. Subsequently, and for the better part of the next four years, the delegations met at Helsinki or at Vienna until the last differences between them were resolved. The process was concluded when on May 26, 1972, Nixon and Brezhnev met in the Great Hall of the Kremlin in order to sign the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, popularly known as SALT I.<sup>3</sup>

SALT I contained two basic agreements. The first agreement was mutual acceptance of parity in anti-ballistic missiles (ABM's) for an unlimited duration. The second was an Interim Agreement on strategic offensive ballistic missiles of five years' duration. The Interim Agreement allowed the USSR a total of 1,618 land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM's), and a total of 950 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM's) in sixty-two submarines. The Interim Agreement allowed the United States 1,054 land-based ICBM's and 710 SLBM's in forty-four submarines.<sup>4</sup> The greater number of missile-launchers allowed the USSR was no oversight on the part of the US delegation. Rather, it reflected the U.S. advantage in the



Multiple, Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle (MIRV). The MIRVed missile-launcher could deliver several nuclear warheads accurately to widely-separated targets. By 1972 the USSR had not mastered MIRV technology, and had it accepted parity in missile-launchers with the USA, it would have conceded a great edge in the number of deliverable warheads to the United States. However, the individual warheads on Soviet land-based ICBM's were considerably larger and more powerful than those on their American counterparts, and when other strategic weapons not included under the limitations of SALT I were included, each side possessed about 4,000 megatons of nuclear high explosive which it could theoretically deliver to the soil of the other.<sup>5</sup>

A very important provision of SALT I concerned measures for the verification of compliance with the treaty's terms. Each side was granted the right to employ "national technical means" to monitor the strategic forces of the other.<sup>6</sup> In practice, "national technical means" amounted to earth-satellites and ground monitoring stations already in existence, or added in future, for the purposes of spying and early warning against nuclear attack. Alleged violations of SALT I detected by these devices were to be referred to a joint Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) for investigation and resolution.<sup>7</sup>

In December, 1972, Soviet and American delegations met at Geneva in order to begin negotiations on a second Interim Agreement on strategic offensive weapons to replace the first Interim Agreement when it expired on October 3, 1977.<sup>8</sup> The second Interim Agreement became popularly known as SALT II. Progress in negotiations was slow in part because SALT II involved a greater range of strategic weapons, including strategic bombers and long-range cruise missiles, than SALT I. Meanwhile, in July, 1974, Nixon and Brezhnev signed a protocol to SALT I which reduced the number of ABM's and their launching sites allowed each side, and also a treaty to limit the size of underground nuclear-weapon test explosions to 150 kilotons.<sup>9</sup> (The Limited Test-Ban Treaty of 1963 barred the United States and the Soviet Union from testing in the atmosphere or underwater.) But a month after these agreements, Nixon resigned his office in the face of possible impeachment in connection with the Watergate Scandal, and a shadow was cast over all his works, including his labors on behalf of SALT I and II.

President Gerald Ford inherited the responsibility for the SALT II negotiations after Nixon's resignation, and in November, 1974, he flew to Vladivostok for direct talks with Chairman Brezhnev. By then the USSR had mastered MIRV technology and was about to begin equipping its larger number of missile-launchers with multiple warheads. The greater Soviet "throw-weight" would eventually allow the USSR to deliver far more megatonage than the smaller American landbased ICBM's. In addition, the Pentagon was alarmed by the appearance of the new Soviet Tu-22M "Backfire" bomber.<sup>10</sup>

At Vladivostok, Ford successfully pressed Brezhnev to concede parity in



strategic offensive weapons under a future SALT II. They agreed that each side would be allowed 2,400 strategic weapon carriers, that no more than 1,320 of them would be MIRVed ballistic-missile launchers, and that only 820 of them could be land-based ICBM's<sup>11</sup> (the type in which the Soviets had a great edge in "throw-weight"). But Brezhnev refused to place a ceiling on "throw-weight," or to classify the "Backfire" bomber as a strategic weapon under the limitations of a SALT II, nor was there much progress in agreement on how to limit long-range cruise missiles (a type in which the U.S. had the advantage). Nevertheless, Ford and Brezhnev agreed that negotiations would continue on these problems at lower levels.<sup>12</sup>

As SALT II negotiations continued at Geneva on into 1975, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was divided over the accuracy of its assessments of Soviet military strength. At the suggestion of George Bush, Director of the CIA, President Ford ordered the creation of a "competitive" intelligence analysis by forming a "Team B" of conservative private critics, led by Richard Pipes, Professor of Russian History and a critic of the SALT process and the policy of *detente* with the Soviet Union. All of the other members of "Team B," in addition, were known to oppose SALT I and II, including three retired generals, a professor of international affairs, and former officials of the State Department, the Department of Defense, and the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.<sup>13</sup> "Team A" consisted of CIA officials responsible for drawing up national intelligence estimates. Curiously, no "Team C" was formed of experienced former officials and professors who were known to support SALT I and II.

"Team B" concluded from its study that the USSR aimed at military superiority over the United States and a "war-winning" strategic capability not consonant with American assumptions under the MAD doctrine.<sup>14</sup> By "cooking" the figures and information provided by the CIA to its own tastes, "Team B" reached vastly different assessments of Soviet power and intentions than the official CIA findings. Although the CIA finally rejected most of the "Team B" conclusions in preparing its last national intelligence estimate under the Ford administration, by the time Jimmy Carter's administration had come to power in January, 1977, the "Team B" views had been "leaked" to the public and were widely embraced by conservatives opposed to SALT II. Even more serious, though Carter and Cyrus Vance, the new Secretary of State, were disposed to take a more optimistic view of Soviet intentions and capabilities, they could not quarrel with the CIA's assessment that the original 1972 balance in deliverable megatonnage had shifted to the Soviet advantage and that the gap would grow larger in the future.<sup>15</sup>

SALT II negotiations were also jeopardized by the factor of "linkage" with international events since 1972. The USSR was at least indirectly responsible for Israel's limited defeat in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 as the chief supplier of arms to the Arab states, and it had never discontinued its support of so-called "Wars of National Liberation" around the globe, which in general did not serve American interests. The United States especially resented Soviet use of surrogate Cuban troops



in the Angolan civil war, and the presence of Soviet military advisers and arms in the Ethiopian and Somalian conflict. The Western oil crisis in the 1970's further aroused fears of Soviet intentions in the Middle East, especially in South Yemen, and along the oil-rich Persian Gulf. And Henry Kissinger, Ford's Secretary of State, had been notably unsuccessful in tying SALT II progress to Soviet international behavior.<sup>16</sup>

In March, 1977, Cyrus Vance tried another approach when he abandoned "linkage" in SALT II negotiations and also proposed a drastic cut in offensive weapons on both sides. He also proposed to postpone the vexing bomber and cruise-missile issues to a SALT III. The Brezhnev government welcomed the avoidance of "linkage," but rejected any deviation from the Vladivostok Accord of 1974. Eventually, Carter and Vance came to accept the main Soviet conditions for negotiating SALT II, but even then the technical problems were so complex that it was the spring of 1979 before a series of compromises finally broke the log-jam in SALT negotiations. (The SALT I Interim Agreement was kept in effect after October, 1977, on an informal basis in the meantime.) Finally, on June 18, 1979, Carter and Brezhnev met at Vienna and signed a new Interim Agreement on offensive strategic weapons, over seven years after the signing of SALT I.<sup>17</sup>

SALT II allowed each side 2,400 strategic weapons carriers, the number to be reduced to 2,250 by January 1, 1981. Of the total, no more than 1,320 of the carriers could be MIRVed ballistic-missile launchers and aircraft armed with long-range cruise missiles, and of those no more than 1,200 could be MIRVed ballistic-missile launchers of any kind, and of those no more than 820 could be MIRVed land-based ICBM launchers. Limits were placed on how many MIRV's could be placed aboard a ballistic-missile launcher, and on how many cruise missiles could be placed aboard a strategic bomber.<sup>18</sup> Although the "Backfire" bomber was not included under SALT II as a strategic weapon, Brezhnev pledged through a "Letter of Understanding" that while SALT II was in effect - through 1985 - no more than thirty "Backfire" bombers would be produced per year, and none would be given strategic range.<sup>19</sup> Finally, a provision of SALT II mandated that a SALT III would be negotiated by the end of 1985.

When Carter referred SALT II to the Senate for hearings on June 22, 1979, he set off a firestorm of debate, both within and beyond the halls of Congress. Opponents of SALT II claimed that the treaty did nothing to rectify the growing "megatonage gap" or the Soviet advantage in "throw-weight." They also claimed that by 1985 the improving accuracy of the giant Soviet SS-18 ICBM would subject up to ninety percent of the U.S. land-based ICBM's to preemptive strike, and this situation would not materially improve until the late 1980's (the so-called "Window of Vulnerability").<sup>20</sup> Moreover, after the loss of the U.S. monitoring stations in Iran following the overthrow of the Shah in January, 1979, the critics also distrusted the U.S. means of verification.<sup>21</sup> And they had many other objections, including the settlement on the "Backfire" bomber. In contrast, defenders of SALT II pointed to



the reduction of offensive strategic weapons on both sides, and to the fact that U.S. missile warheads were far more numerous (9,900 to 7,800) than Soviet warheads even if they were less powerful.<sup>22</sup> They argued that SALT II would restrict the SS-18 to no more than ten MIRV's, whereas without SALT II restrictions the Soviets might mount as many as thirty MIRV's on the SS-18. They also argued that SALT II did not prevent the USA from deploying a new large land-based ICBM (the MX) or a new SLBM (the Trident II) with greater accuracy than the Trident I. Finally, they argued that a rejection of SALT II was likely to lead to an unrestrained strategic arms race.<sup>23</sup>

Had SALT II's fate in the Senate been settled entirely on its technical merits, it is difficult to say what that fate would have been. As it happened, the factor of "linkage" proved its undoing, and without a final vote in the Senate. The process began in September when conservative agitation helped to whip up public excitement over the "discovery" of a Soviet combat brigade, about 2,600 troops, in Cuba. The unit had been in Cuba for many years, but its presence had never been admitted by any previous administration.<sup>24</sup> Then on November 2 militant Iranian students seized the U.S. embassy in Teheran and took its staff as hostages. The favorable vote of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee on November 9 on SALT II was quite overshadowed by the excitement of the Iranian Crisis. The majority leader in the Senate decided to postpone a full Senate debate and vote on SALT II. Then on December 7, the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization voted in favor of deploying U.S. Pershing II ballistic missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles on West European soil, the first such U.S. weapons to be based in Europe with enough range to strike into Soviet Russia since President John F. Kennedy had ordered the removal of Jupiter missiles from Italy and Turkey in 1963.<sup>25</sup> The USSR charged that the action would undermine the balance of forces arrived at under SALT II. But the crowning blow was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, beginning on December 24, an action that Carter denounced as the "greatest threat to world peace since 1945."<sup>26</sup> But while Carter was doubtless indulging in verbal hyperbole, the invasion of Afghanistan gave him an excuse to withdraw SALT II from the Senate's consideration in January, 1980, and to pledge that it would not be resubmitted until Soviet forces were withdrawn from Afghanistan.<sup>27</sup>

But more than SALT II was abandoned in the final months of the Carter administration. Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs, had long distrusted the SALT process in part because it was based on the MAD doctrine. In the aftermath of SALT II's abandonment, he worked manfully to bring about a fundamental change in U.S. strategic doctrine. His task was made easier when Cyrus Vance, a long-time supporter of both MAD and SALT II, resigned as Secretary of State in a dispute with Carter over an attempt to rescue the Iranian hostages by a military expedition. Edmund Muskie, Vance's successor at State, proved no match for Brzezinski in attempting to influence Carter on the MAD issue, and on July 25 Carter signed Presidential Directive 59 (PD 59) without even consulting the new Secretary of State.<sup>28</sup>



PD 59 represented a revolution in strategic assumptions. It ordered the Pentagon to plan for the contingencies of limited nuclear war with strategic as well as tactical weapons, and to assume that at least certain kinds of nuclear wars were "winnable." The new doctrine, eventually known as Nuclear Utilization Target Selection (NUTS), also assumed that the United States and Soviet Union were racing for military superiority.<sup>29</sup> Carter had already approved the further development and eventual deployment of the MX ICBM and the Trident II SLBM, both very suitable weapons under the new doctrine because of their power and great accuracy.<sup>30</sup> Thus, even before Ronald Reagan's victory in the November, 1980, elections, and his assumption of the Presidential office in January, 1981, the course had been set for both a massive American strategic rearmament and a willingness to engage in at least limited nuclear war. Not surprisingly, the Reagan administration embraced PD 59 and the NUTS doctrine with fervor. It not only continued development of the MX and the Trident II missiles, but approved development of the B-1 bomber (which Carter had rejected) as part of a \$1.6 trillion defense program over five years.<sup>31</sup> And, although negotiations resumed with the USSR under the rubric of Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) in June, 1982, the American military premise for those negotiations is far different from that which undergirded the SALT negotiations for a decade.<sup>32</sup> It remains to be seen where START will end, and whether NUTS will prove madder than MAD, but the control and limitation of strategic nuclear weapons remains a central question of our time.

<sup>1</sup>Robert S. McNamara, *The Essence of Security: Reflections in Office* (New York, Evanston and London, 1968), p. 61 and ff. Franklin A. Long and George W. Rathjens, *Arms, Defense Policy, and Arms Control* (New York, 1976), pp. 102-103; and U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements: Texts and Histories of Negotiations* (Washington, D.C., 1980 ed.), pp. 132-133. (The last title is hereinafter referred to as USACDA.)

<sup>2</sup>USACDA, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 133-135.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 137 and ff.; and p. 148 and ff.

<sup>5</sup>Ground Zero, *Nuclear War: What's in it for You?* (New York, 1982), Table C.1., n.p.

<sup>6</sup>USACDA, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>October 3 was the anniversary of the effective date of the exchange of SALT I ratifications between the USA and USSR.

<sup>9</sup>Protocol to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and the Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapons Test. (The last is also known as the Threshold Test-Ban Treaty.) USACDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-168.



<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 201. According to John Prados, **The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength** (New York, 1982), pp. 221-222, and p. 257 and ff., the first Soviet MIRVed missile - an SS-19 - was tested in August, 1973, and became operational in December, 1974.

<sup>11</sup>USACDA, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>13</sup>Prados, *op. cit.*, p. 250. According to Arthur Macy Cox, **Russian Roulette: The Superpower Game** (New York, 1982), p. 73, besides Pipes, the members of "Team B" were Paul Nitze, William R. Van Cleave, Paul O. Wolfowitz, Seymour Weiss, David O. Graham, Foy D. Kohler, Thomas Wolfe, John W. Vogt, Jr., and Jasper A. Welch.

<sup>14</sup>Prados, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>15</sup>Ground Zero, *op. cit.*, Table C.1, n.p., shows a Soviet advantage of 5,400MT to 3,800MT in 1978, 5,700MT to 4000MT in 1980, and 7,100MT to 4,100MT in 1982.

<sup>16</sup>Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 37 and Chapter 2 *passim*.

<sup>17</sup>USACDA, *op. cit.*, p. 202; and Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 80 and ff.

<sup>18</sup>USACDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.* For the text of Brezhnev's letter, see p. 239.

<sup>20</sup>For a summary of views opposed to SALT II, see Daniel O. Graham, **Shall America be Defended? SALT II and Beyond** (New York, 1979), *passim*. Graham, a retired Army lieutenant general, was a former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and a member of "Team B," according to Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>21</sup>The Iranian stations monitored Soviet missile-testing sites in southern Russia, and were the main source of information on the capabilities of Soviet strategic missiles. A few months would pass before facilities in Norway and a new U. S. earth satellite system could effectively take their place. Prados, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-274.

<sup>22</sup>"U. S.-Soviet Military Facts," **The Defense Monitor**, Vol. XI, No. 6, [June] 1982, p. 1. Defenders of SALT II could also point to the technical infeasibility of a preemptive strike as explained in James F. Dunnigan, **How to Make War: A Comprehensive Guide to Modern Warfare** (New York, 1982), pp. 296-299. For a countervailing view, see Ray Bonds, ed., **Russian Military Power** (New York, 1982), pp. 222-223. A good summary of the pro-SALT II position may be found in "SALT II: One Small Step for Mankind," **The Defense Monitor**, Vol. VIII, No. 5, July 1979, *passim*.

<sup>23</sup>"SALT II," **Defense Monitor**, *passim*.

<sup>24</sup>Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>25</sup>U. S. aircraft bearing nuclear weapons have, of course, been continually stationed in Europe since 1963, many with enough range to reach Soviet territory. Brezhnev originally wanted the planes of this so-called Forward Based System to be brought under the limits of SALT II, but at Vladivostok agreed that they would be addressed in separate negotiations on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF). USACDA, *op. cit.*, p. 201. INF negotiations, however, did not begin until the fall of 1981.

<sup>26</sup>Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>27</sup>Prados, *op. cit.*, p. 282.



<sup>28</sup>Cox, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*; and Prados, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

<sup>30</sup>Prados, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-290.

<sup>31</sup>Jerrold L. and Leona P. Schecter, "The War Planners," *Esquire*, Vol. 99, No. 1, January 1983, p. 68 and *passim*.

<sup>32</sup>Richard Burt, "Evolution of the U.S. START Approach," Current Policy No. 436, Bureau of Public Affairs, U. S. State Department, December 1982. (Reprint of article in *NATO Review*, Vol. 30, September 1982.) Burt is Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. According to Cox, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-88. Burt, when a reporter for the *New York Times*, was Brzezinski's favorite press person.



## THE MERMAID HOAX: INDICATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, IN THE 1840S

Lester D. Stephens

In 1842 the great master of humbuggery, P. T. Barnum, concocted one of the most splendid shams in his long record of hoaxes. Keenly aware of the gullibility of the American public, Barnum decided to exhibit a small "mermaid," ostensibly acquired indirectly from a sailor in the Fiji Islands. This "ugly, dried-up, black-looking, and diminutive specimen, about three feet long," as Barnum himself described it, was actually an artful combination of a monkey and a fish. Glued together in some fashion and heavily layered with a dark varnish, the object consisted of the head, arms, and upper torso of a simian, and the abdomen and tail of a fish. Barnum arranged to lease the object from its owner by offering him a share of the profits and promising not to allow anyone to dissect the combined creature.<sup>1</sup>

After first publicizing and exhibiting the mermaid in New York, the clever Barnum sent his uncle Alanson Taylor to Charleston to display the "Fejee Mermaid" at the admission price of fifty cents per adult. On January 16, 1843, the Charleston **Courier** announced that the "Fejee Mermaid" would soon be exhibited in the city. "This anomaly in nature," said the **Courier**, "will doubtless create much interest among the scientific portion of our fellow-citizens." Indeed, it did, and four days later the able naturalist and German Lutheran clergyman John Bachman launched an attack against the exhibition.<sup>2</sup>

Writing under the pseudonym "No Humbug," Bachman openly denounced the exhibit in a letter to the Charleston **Mercury** on January 20. "Our good natured community of Charleston," wrote Bachman, "has always shown a great willingness to be gulled by wonderful narratives and strange sights." He continued: "If after this notice they are so weak as to pay their half dollar to see a fishes tail attached to the head of a Baboon--they are at liberty to do so...." But he believed that he was obliged to reveal the hoax. "On the whole," Bachman charged, "the manufacture of the Mermaid is rather a clumsy affair--the seams are not sufficiently covered to conceal the point of union between Fish and Monkey even through a glass case." Then he proposed that the Charleston naturalists be allowed to "take his smoke dried affair out of the glass case and examine it scientifically." If it were "a true production of nature," vowed Bachman, then the naturalists would provide "a certificate that it is the greatest wonder in nature" and they would announce that the exhibitor was not an imposter. On the other hand, he added, if they find the object to be a "contemptible hoax," they will ask him to burn the monstrosity and leave the city at once.<sup>3</sup>

Barnum's uncle quickly took advantage of the publicity furnished by Bachman's letter and immediately sent a reply to the **Mercury**. By *ad hominem* and sweeping counterclaims, Taylor attacked "No Humbug" as a man who did not have "the moral courage, or manliness to affix his **real** name to his communication." Ignoring the inconsistency of his charge by signing his own missive simply as "The Man Who



Exhibits the Mermaid," Taylor denounced Bachman's disclaimer as "groundless and malicious." In addition, he boldly asserted that "No Humbug" could not possibly belong "to the scientific and highly respected medical faculty of this city," many of whom, he falsely swore, were "perfectly satisfied of the reality" of the mermaid. Then he offered to pay "No Humbug" the handsome sum of \$500 if he could show any baboon or monkey with head and shoulders like those of the mermaid. He added, however, that he could not allow the naturalists to examine the object because they would resort to "cutting and defacing it." Dissection of the mermaid was unnecessary anyway, declared Taylor, for it had already been examined "out of the glass" by scientists in Boston and New York, but not by "cutting and boring."<sup>4</sup>

Soon "the rejoinders to the Mermaid's defence" were pouring into the office of the editor of the **Mercury**. At that point Taylor received an unexpected and most welcome boost from the **Courier**, whose editor was Richard Yeadon, a lawyer, an outspoken non-conformist, and an ardent and able debater. Thriving upon controversy, Yeadon took up the cause of the mermaid, after personally viewing the object on display at Masonic Hall. Taylor allowed Yeadon to take the mermaid from the glass case and "to handle and examine" it. Satisfied, Yeadon wrote in the **Courier** on January 23 that the mermaid appeared to be a natural phenomenon, and he declared that if it were a deception, it was "beyond the discovery of both . . . [the] senses" of touch and sight. Certainly, he asserted, the object was "no compound or combination . . . of ape and fish." Although he opined that he would never again believe in the beauty of mermaids, Yeadon stated that he was "rather inclined to have faith" in the authenticity of the specimen.<sup>5</sup>

Incensed by Yeadon's statement and "acutated" by "the cause of science, of truth and good morals," Bachman fired off another letter to the **Mercury**, again using the pseudonym "No Humbug." Since Yeadon had refused to publish "No Humbug's" first letter, the redoubtable naturalist knew that his only forum was the rival newspaper. "I profess to be acquainted with Natural History," said "No Humbug." No such animal "could possibly exist," he continued, for it had nostrils and would therefore be a warm-blooded and lung-breathing creature, not a cold-blooded animal that breathed through gills. "Two such contrary characters cannot exist in the same animal, unless we reverse every law by which nature is governed," added Bachman. The mermaid's head contained the teeth of the "Quadrupana (Baboon and Monkey)" which feed "on nuts, fruits, &c." and the creature's arms were developed for climbing. In fact, noted Bachman, the animal "would drown in half an hour" if left in the water. He repeated his charge that the mermaid was "manufactured," and he asked the exhibitor to allow Professors John Edwards Holbrook, Eli Geddings, Lewis R. Gibbes, and "Dr. Bachman" to examine the specimen, promising "not to mutilate or injure it in any particular."<sup>6</sup>

Although he considered the hoax bad enough of itself, Bachman was even more annoyed over the decision of the **Courier's** editor to praise the exhibit. "Let not the



cause of science be degraded," he said, "by the exhibition of a despicable fraud, backed by the recommendations of a public journal." Arguing that "our newspapers should be the vehicle of truth," Bachman had originally believed that a simple denunciation of the fraud would cause the exhibitor to grab his glass case and flee to another city. Now, he was forced to summon support from his colleagues. Thus, he penned a note to Lewis Gibbes, proposing that Gibbes, Geddings, Holbrook, and he himself should go "separately to the [exhibition] room--without making ourselves known & satisfying ourselves of the manner in which the animal has been manufactured." He noted that the exhibitor would allow each one to remove the creature from the case "if you do not let him see that you are an unbeliever." By complying with his request, continued Bachman, "You will of course give us this lift in the cause of science."

Meanwhile, Taylor grew bolder, and he sent another anonymous letter to the **Mercury**. But the **Mercury's** editor took the liberty of "first expunging sundry hard epithets and personalities" from Taylor's criticism because he knew Bachman to be the author of the expose. Taylor's letter contained nothing new but consisted only of the same broad generalizations and wild charges previously levelled at "No Humbug." Bachman followed with an irate reply, noting that he had initially carried his first message to Yeadon, but that the **Courier's** editor had refused to publish it even though he "knew the author too well to suspect his knowledge of Natural History or his veracity." Yet, noted Bachman, Yeadon had rejected his letter because he thought it "too severe." Arguing that Yeadon was not qualified to judge the object, he accused the editor of "egregious ignorance of the first principles of science." Even "the little girl in the nursery can tell the difference between a bona fide child and a doll-baby," added Bachman.<sup>8</sup>

Stung by those sharp words, the crusty editor published a rejoinder on February 1. Accusing Bachman of an "unprovoked and civil assault" upon him, Yeadon praised the mermaid exhibitor, and he reiterated that he had actually scrutinized the object by sight and touch. If it were a deception, he repeated, "it passed the ken of our senses." Claiming that he had merely stated the facts, Yeadon asserted once more that the mermaid was not "a compound of monkey's head and fish's tail." His critic, said Yeadon, "speaks as commandingly and oraculously as if he were on the tripod and the divine afflatus upon him." The records show, he added, that there are "credible accounts" of the existence of mermaids. God, he concluded, has created "many animated beings . . . that live and move and have their being, in a manner mysterious and inexplicable to us . . ."

By this time Taylor had moved on to Savannah and then to Augusta, Georgia, where he exhibited the now widely touted "Fejee Mermaid." But the controversy continued in Charleston. On February 6, Yeadon addressed the subject once more. Still smarting from Bachman's charge that he was unqualified to judge the authenticity of the mermaid, he declared that he was entitled to an opinion and that the naturalist could not force him to think as he did. "Now we care not a whit, not a



stiver," said Yeadon, "whether the Mermaid is real or not--the **Courier never asserted it was.**" The editor swore that he would make no further reference to the subject. But, fearing that the controversy had not yet ended, a mutual friend arranged for Yeadon and Bachman to meet in his home and patch up their differences. They agreed to do so, and at the end of the meeting they promised to quarrel no more in the newspapers. Bachman chose, however, to publicize the end of the dispute and thus wrote to the **Mercury** on February 7, claiming that he had accomplished his objective of revealing the hoax and noting that Yeadon had confessed he was "not fully aware" of Bachman's authorship of the letters signed "No Humbug." He added that "we met and parted as friends, after a long and interesting conversation on natural history," and he observed that Yeadon "now talks less confidently of Mermaids."<sup>10</sup>

Bachman's letter did not sit well with Yeadon, however, and so he published a response on the next day. The irascible editor denied that he had freely consented to meet the naturalist but came "only after much persuasion and solicitation." Although he declared that he was ready to restore good feelings, Yeadon claimed that he had departed with the understanding that he would reply to anything else written by Bachman on the subject of the mermaid. Moreover, he swore that he had not asserted less confidence in the existence of mermaids but only that he had said he would change his mind if stronger evidence was presented.<sup>11</sup> The flames had been fanned once more.

Fuel was added to the fire by two other newspaper publications, the first of which was a certificate printed in the **Mercury** on February 5. Signed by Bachman, Gibbes, Geddings and Holbrook, the certificate noted that each man had "examined the production . . . purporting to be 'the most wonderful curiosity in the world'--the Mermaid," and it declared that "this pretended wonder is formed by the artificial union of two very distinct and widely separated species--an ape and a fish." In some detail the authors of the certificate cited the characteristics of each genera from which the creature was formed, and they pointed out how the two parts were joined. "This caricature of nature," they averred, "is rendered more absurd, when we take into consideration that we have here the whole of the chest of a monkey and the skin of the whole chest, abdomen and tail of a fish, giving to the animal two chests and two abdomens." They ended by deploring "the exhibition of such a deformity" as "an injury to natural science," the perpetuation "on the minds of the ignorant [of] an absurd fable," and the extortion of "money from the public under false pretences."<sup>12</sup>

Soon thereafter, Taylor wrote to the **Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel**, which had also printed the certificate. He railed against Bachman and shamelessly accused him of playing with the truth, adding that in this "**grand and gorgeous certificate . . . we find nothing but rash, bold, assertion.**" Yeadon had meanwhile taken note of the certificate, and a few days later he wrote "there is no science in this great inquiry of 'seams.'" Not even, he continued, if these four naturalists "could add to their



names and professional titles those of 'L.L.D. and A.S.S.' are [they] entitled to authority in this matter" because they have never examined the object scientifically. Picking on minor variations in the terms used by Bachman and the certificate-writers, Yeadon concluded that "these boasted **naturalists** differ among themselves."<sup>13</sup>

At this point Bachman ceased to carry on the verbal battle with Yeadon, and Lewis Gibbes took up the cause. It was just as well for the case of the naturalists, for Bachman had already fired a blunderbuss of hot words at Taylor and Yeadon with little effect. The quieter and more even-tempered Gibbes was a man who could effectively wield the scapel of logic and meticulously dissect Yeadon's argument. The thirty-three-year-old Gibbes had graduated with honors from South Carolina College, studied in Paris, and published several articles by this time. A keen student of mathematics, an able logician, and a master of seven languages, Gibbes was a professor of science at the College of Charleston.<sup>14</sup>

In a letter to the **Courier** on February 14, Gibbes carefully outlined his objections to the editor's position on the mermaid. Much more effectively than Bachman, he argued from the tenets of scientific inquiry. First, Gibbes noted that "facts are in their nature unalterable" and must not be modified or distorted. Then, he observed that the human mind tends "to form exaggerated views of the value of its own powers, and of those facts favoring its own opinion, and to diminish the value of opposing facts." In his lengthy argument Gibbes focused upon what he considered Yeadon's main difficulty in apprehending these crucial points, namely his dependence upon the senses of touch and sight as solely sufficient to judge matters of a scientific nature. To Yeadon's contention that since he had applied both senses in examining the mermaid, Gibbes replied: "Now, sir, as a legal man, you surely do not mean to say that party is in the right which has the greater **number** of witnesses in its favor. Why, my dear sir, that would reduce judicial proceedings to the last degree of simplicity, a mere matter of arithmetic, a mere counting of noses."<sup>15</sup>

But the question of the number of senses was not the only argument to be countered; just as importantly, the powers of reasoning and discrimination had to be considered in matter of judging scientific phenomena. Gibbes therefore pointed out that since scientists had "by study and long practice" acquired and developed such skills, they were able to discern matters not readily perceptible to untrained men by means of ordinary sensations. He also noted that Yeadon not only failed to recognize the difference between genera and species but also that he was wrong in stating that there were only three simian species in the world. Gibbes admitted that although he could not identify the species of monkey in the mermaid, he was nonetheless convinced "of the imposture." And to Yeadon's insistence that the creature must be taken from the glass case and closely examined, Gibbes declared that it was unnecessary to handle the mermaid. "If the seams were left visible, you know, no one would believe it to be a Mermaid, and the whole difficulty lay in disguising the animal and concealing the seams." Naturalists do not work by the



methods of ordinary sensations, concluded Gibbs, for they know genera and species and can thus assert that the seams are there since the creature is an "artificial union of ape and fish."<sup>16</sup>

Yeadon responded immediately to Gibbs, repeating his view that sight and touch were sufficient to determine the authenticity of the mermaid. Only dissection could prove otherwise; observation through a glass constituted no scientific examination. Gibbs was not done, however, and so he penned a reply two days later. Apologizing for straying into the territory of law, Gibbs contended that Yeadon and other attorneys "will doubtless pardon the trespass when they recollect that it is done in endeavoring to recover game taken by 'poaching' on the grounds of the naturalist." Then, once again, he criticized Yeadon for his simplistic sensory explanations, and he repeated his contention that "the competency and the credibility of . . . witnesses" were more crucial to the law and to science than were the number of opinions. "Now I ask respectfully," he wrote, "whether the testimony of my senses is not more credible than yours?"<sup>17</sup>

Yeadon could not let the matter rest there, for he still believed that his judgment was as good as Gibbs' when based upon visual sensation. Rejecting the charge that he had trespassed into the territory of the scientists, he chided Gibbs for not only endeavoring to instruct him in science but also in the law, which was his own domain. In fact, he accused Gibbs of using the certificate as "a Juggernaut" to run over him. Men of science, he said, are "frail and fallible" and often "substitute fancy for fact." Indeed, he added, Gibbs "never saw the seam but only imagined it."<sup>18</sup>

In his last letter on the subject, published in the *Courier* on February 27, Gibbs patiently but firmly countered Yeadon's argument. On scientific subjects, he told his detractor, "many **look** but the few **see**." Many persons, including Yeadon, do not "**reason**." The editor might "have as good eyes as others," said Gibbs, but he did "not yet thoroughly know the difference between **looking** and **seeing**." Then Gibbs proceeded to describe in detail how he could detect the seam of union in the mermaid, and once more he criticized Yeadon for abusing the rules of evidence, including those in legal matters. He added persuasive comments on the nature of marine mammalia in order to show that if such a creature as a mermaid did exist, it would certainly have to resemble one of them and not a species from the family of pisces. In conclusion, Gibbs offered his views upon "the mission of scientific men" and upon the role of the newspaper in advancing truth. The naturalists, he said, strive "to declare to their fellow men . . . the ways of God in the government of the material world;" they do not seek individual glory but endeavor to enlighten others, "without emotion" and with "calmness and dignity." The newspaper must be a vehicle through which men can be enlightened, and scientists should use it for "the discovery of truth" and to "exhibit the principles" that govern the topic of discussion.<sup>19</sup>



Yeadon would have the last word, however, and on March 2 he published a reply to Gibbs' final letter. Ridiculing the naturalist's reference to "looking but not seeing," he castigated Gibbs for his "feat of optical legerdemain." Surely, he said, Gibbs was superior to him in purely scientific matters, but, he rejoined, "one may be able correctly to criticize a book without being competent to write it." No one, he remarked, can "**dictate** me out of the evidence of my senses." Gibbs must **prove** that the seam existed. You may be "content with your scientific superiority over me," he told Gibbs, but you should not "endeavor to strip me of my **toga** also." Gibbs was not a pope, he said, and the scientist was not free from criticism simply because he was a scientist.<sup>20</sup>

Neither Gibbs nor any other Charleston scientist replied to Yeadon's final missive. Surely, by that time they had come to realize that it would do no good to carry on with the controversy. Yeadon and Bachman both continued to fume, however. In early May, Yeadon took advantage of an opportunity to criticize Bachman at a meeting of the commissioners of the Poor House. He accused the clergyman of "asserting an untruth," and he declared that he "was a disgrace to . . . [the] cloth." Bachman learned of the tirade against him, and he told a friend that he had been "unjustly assailed & traduced without even the shadow [?] of proof." A minister, he continued, "should only resort to the weapons of reason & truth." Bachman then outlined in detail the entire array of events from his first letter on the mermaid through a threatened lawsuit by Yeadon. But, although they were still referring to the escapade many months later, both Bachman and Gibbs were done with the eccentric editor of the *Courier* and the "pretended mermaid." The controversy had passed into the pages of history.<sup>21</sup>

At first glance, the mermaid controversy seems quite trivial and insignificant. But, in fact, the dispute reveals much about scientific thought and the status of science in Charleston during the 1840s, a period when science was achieving great progress in the nation as a whole. At least four major points about science in Charleston during the 1840s are indicated by the mermaid affair: (1) the comparative independence of inquiry into natural history from religious prescriptions; (2) the influence of Baconianism on scientific thought; (3) the role of the newspaper as a forum for advancing scientific knowledge; and (4) the diffusion of scientific interests among the public.

The controversy over the mermaid contained no comments on religion, and indirectly it included only a few references to God. Indeed, the clergyman Bachman never appealed to divine authority, basing his arguments instead upon the principles of scientific inquiry. Nor did Gibbs, a devout Episcopalian, resort to religious explanations, although, of course, he invoked the name of God in connection with the fruits of research. For these southern naturalists the argument must be decided upon the grounds of scientific investigation. Certainly, religion was important to them: they viewed natural phenomena as manifestations of God, and, as scientists, they sought to discover and classify specimens in order to find revelations of the



divine plan. But they would not fall back upon religious authority to support their arguments in matters belonging to the realm of science.<sup>22</sup>

This view was consistent with the Baconian ideal embraced by the southern scientists. As noted by George Daniels, the proponents of the Baconian model observed three major principles in scientific inquiry. First, they held that all scientific explanations must be based on observable facts. Thus, they lauded empiricism as the only valid mode of investigation. Second, the advocates of the Baconian ideal shunned hypothesizing, which they viewed as theorizing or metaphysical speculation. Taken as rigid prescriptions, these principles ultimately deterred new methods of discovering knowledge, and they promoted systematics as the ideal of inquiry. By the 1840s the influence of the Baconian model had begun to wane everywhere in the country except among southern scientists, who continued to adhere to the ideal long after the Civil War.<sup>23</sup>

The third element of Baconianism, namely, a primary concern with taxonomy, was thus particularly manifest in the activities of the antebellum Charleston scientists, most of whom viewed themselves as naturalists. They therefore tended to ignore experimentation. Even chemistry and physics were guided by this philosophy, and the Charleston scientists rarely conducted experiments in those subjects. The study of geology in the Old South was likewise affected, and scientists who published works in that field stuck mainly to paleontology, nomenclature, and geological surveys. Astronomy was also viewed largely as a science of identifying and naming celestial objects. Only John McCrady, a brilliant young Charleston zoologist who studied under Louis Agassiz in the mid-1850s, would go beyond systematics to embryological investigations, and even he viewed himself primarily as a taxonomist. For the Charleston scientists, the Baconian model harmonized with the notion that science was merely an extension of the Bible: God revealed himself both in the Holy Scriptures and in the natural world, and the task of the scientist was to find, name, and classify the phenomena God had created.<sup>24</sup>

Evidence of these two guiding principles, that is, empiricism and systematics, are fully revealed in the mermaid controversy, especially in the letters written by Gibbes but also in those penned by Bachman. Both scientists stressed the importance of careful observation and factual statements. They also emphasized the necessity of **reasoning** from the evidence, or, in other words, the inductive method, which was the heart of the Baconian model. Moreover, in their immediate arguments on the subject of the mermaid, they implied (or in the case of Gibbes, directly stated) their belief in science as the discovery of divine manifestations in nature. The dispute, then, was more than a trivial argument for them; it was instead a contest to see that scientific methodology, as they understood it, should prevail. Otherwise, the progress of past decades would be reversed.

This concern must also be understood against the backdrop of scientific



awareness among the public. In spite of Thomas Cary Johnson's claim that scientific interests enjoyed high favor among the southern populace, the fact is that scientific activity in the Old South was neither as widespread nor as effectively promoted there as it was in the antebellum Northeast. The Charleston naturalists certainly realized this condition, and they hoped to improve the situation. Hence, they viewed the newspaper as an important tool of education. Johnson was correct in noting that scientific interests flourished in the South and that the region produced many able scientists, but he failed to show how those interests compared with those in other sections of the nation. In the 1840s Charleston could not, like Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, boast a really effective museum of natural history or a local scientific association. Certainly, by the early 1850s the scientists in Charleston were well on their way in developing both, but they were deterred by a relatively small urban population, difficulties of travel and communication, and a very late start. In 1853 they formed the Elliott Society of Natural History, but, although it made significant progress, the Society never exceeded seventy-eight persons in membership, and only a small handful of its members ever took an active part in its affairs. Thus, in order to increase the size and influence of the Elliott Society, its leaders were eventually compelled to waive expectations of proven scientific activity and to open its rolls to anyone professing an interest in science.<sup>26</sup> Ironically, they even admitted Richard Yeadon to membership in the late 1850s. Moreover, the role of science in antebellum southern colleges was not as strong as it was in the Northeast. Until recently scholars have maintained that science never really caught on in antebellum southern colleges, but this interpretation is no longer valid. Yet, comparative studies do show that the sciences in the Old South did not receive the recognition gained elsewhere in the nation's antebellum colleges, even though the southern colleges could claim several able scientists among their faculty.<sup>27</sup> For these reasons it was therefore important to the Charleston naturalists that they not only stand strongly against the abuse of science by Yeadon and the hoaxers but also use the newspapers to promote scientific understanding.

In retrospect, then, the mermaid controversy reflects much about the state of scientific thought in Charleston during the 1840s. The affair was more than a mere quarrel with an unscrupulous showman and an intractable newspaper editor; it was, in fact, a major effort to advance the scientific enterprise and to loosen the bonds of ignorance. Given the state of antebellum southern science, the endeavor is worthy of note.

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<sup>1</sup>Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of P. T. Barnum* (Boston, 1973), 62-63.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 63-66; Charleston *Courier*, January 16, 1843, p. 2. A sketch of Bachman can be found in Thomas Cary Johnson, Jr., *Scientific Interests in the Old South* (New York, 1936; reprint ed., Wilmington, Delaware, 1973), 138-140.



<sup>3</sup>Charleston *Mercury*, January 20, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, January 21, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, January 23, 1843, p. 2; Charleston *Courier*, January 23, 1843, p. 1. For sketches of Yeadon, see William Lee Thomas Crocker, "Richard Yeadon" (Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1927) and John Calhoun Ellen, Jr., "The Public Life of Richard Yeadon" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1953). See also Herbert Ravenel Sass, *Outspoken: 150 Years of the News and Courier* (Columbia, S.C., 1953), 11-15.

<sup>6</sup>Charleston *Mercury*, January 26, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, John Bachman to Professor [Lewis R.] Gibbs, n.d., Charleston Museum Library.

<sup>8</sup>Both Taylor's letter and the editor's comments are in the Charleston *Mercury*, February 1, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Charleston *Courier*, February 1, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, February 6, 1843, p. 2; Charleston *Mercury*, February 7, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Charleston *Courier*, February 8, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup>Charleston *Mercury*, February 5, 1843, p. 2; Harris, *Humbug*, 66.

<sup>13</sup>Augusta (Ga.) *Chronicle and Sentinel*, February 8, 1843, p. 2, and February 16, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup>A discussion of Gibbs is given in my "Lewis R. Gibbs and Scientific Activity in Charleston," paper presented at the Third Citadel Conference on the South, Charleston, S.C., April 25, 1981, and in my "Scientific Societies in the Old South," paper presented at the First Barnard-Millington Symposium on Southern Science and Medicine: Science in the Old South, University, Mississippi, March 25-27, 1982 (publication forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup>Charleston *Courier*, February 14, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, February 15, 1843, p. 2, and February 22, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, February 23, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, February 27, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, March 2, 1843, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>John Bachman to [?], May 8, 1843 (draft of a letter in a wrapper marked "Mermaid Controversy"), in Charleston Museum Library; Charleston *Mercury*, March 29, 1843, p. 2; Charleston *Courier*, March 20, 1843, p. 2; Harris, *Humbug*, 66-67. So struck were Bachman and Gibbs by the controversy that they referred to it and to Yeadon again on later occasions: see Bachman to Gibbs, August 8, 1843, and September 11, 1843, in Charleston Museum Library; Gibbs to [A.A. Gould], December 2, 1843, Manuscripts Department, Houghton Library, Harvard University. In a letter to Gibbs, dated March 27, 1843, John P. Barratt, an able naturalist living near Abbeville, S.C., jested about the "mermaid scrape" in a bit of doggerel, but he was quite serious in his view that "Yeadon is a dear lover of controversy . . . but Naturalists want facts." Barratt's letter in Charleston Museum Library.

<sup>22</sup>For a discussion of views on science and religion in the period, see Herbert Hovenkamp. *Science and Religion in America, 1800-1860* (Philadelphia, 1978), especially pp. 37-56, and E. Brooks Holifield, "Science and Religion in the Old South: Scientists and Theologians," paper presented at the First



Barnard-Millington Symposium on Science and Medicine in the Old South, University, Mississippi, March 25-27, 1983 (publication forthcoming).

<sup>23</sup>George H. Daniels, **American Science in the Age of Jackson** (New York, 1968), 63-137.

<sup>24</sup>Stephens, "Scientific Societies in the Old South"; Hovenkamp, **Science and Religion in America**, pp. 37-56.

<sup>25</sup>Scrapbook of Lewis R. Gibbes, in the Special Collections Department, College of Charleston Library; Gibbes to Dana, June 4, 1849, and December 16, 1851, in the Dana Family Papers, Yale University Library.

<sup>26</sup>Johnson, **Scientific Interests in the Old South**, *passim*; Stephens, "Scientific Societies in the Old South"; Manuscript Proceedings of the Elliott Society of Natural History, December 1, 1857, in the Charleston Museum Library.

<sup>27</sup>Stanley M. Guralnick, "The American Scientist in Higher Education, 1820-1910," in **The Sciences in the American Context**, ed. Nathan Reingold (Washington, D.C., 1979), 99-141; Ronald L. Numbers and Janet S. Numbers, "Science in the Old South: A Reappraisal," **Journal of Southern History**, 48 (May, 1982), 163-184; James O. Breeden, "Science in the Old South," paper presented at the First Barnard-Millington Symposium on Science and Medicine in the Old South, University, Mississippi, March 25-27, 1982.



## THE STATUS OF MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Rodger E. Stroup

In May of 1981, Furman University sponsored a series of lectures in honor of retiring professor of history Albert N. Sanders. Entitled "Writing South Carolina History," these historiographical lectures reviewed the current status of research and writing on South Carolina history. Delivered by prominent scholars, the lectures provided an overview of the current status of scholarship dealing with relevant subjects and epochs in South Carolina's past.

While these lectures dealt primarily with the state's political and economic history, there was an interesting comment made by several of the speakers. For example, after reviewing the status of scholarship on the state's antebellum period, Dr. Walter B. Edgar commented that historians had made great strides in understanding the political, social and economic developments of the antebellum period, yet very little significant work had been published that shed any light on the material culture of pre-Civil War South Carolina. Dr. Edgar's remarks were echoed during presentations by Dr. George C. Rogers, Dr. Robert M. Weir and Dr. Lewis P. Jones.

The role that material culture artifacts can play in the understanding of the past has only recently become a significant portion of contemporary historical scholarship. Historians have traditionally turned to written material for sources of information, but, until the advent of the "new social history" movement of the 1960's and 1970's, the use of three dimensional artifacts had been almost completely overlooked. As one frustrated material culture advocate noted, "We have many Chairs of History, but few historians of chairs."

Historians are beginning to discover that artifacts can play an important part in revealing the past. In his recently published anthology, **Material Culture Studies in America**, Thomas J. Schlereth states that he is "a firm believer in material culture studies as one of the more underated avenues to historical awareness and understanding. In my judgment, material culture studies are done best when they are done from a historical perspective." Schlereth argues further that "I by no means wish to suggest that documentary, oral, and statistical evidence are not to be used in historical research. I merely wish to claim that objects can provide us with numerous and valuable insights into the past. To neglect such data in any modern historical inquiry is to overlook a significant body of research evidence."<sup>1</sup> To date the use by historians in South Carolina of material culture resources has been very limited.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest some reasons for the lack of scholarship in material culture studies in South Carolina and to review briefly that body of work that has been published. Additionally, some suggestions on future avenues of research will hopefully lead to an increase in scholarly activity in this field.



Perhaps the first order of business should be to define exactly what is meant by material culture and to outline the parameters of this presentation. There are many elaborate definitions of material culture, but the one I prefer by Leland Ferguson of the University of South Carolina simply defines it as "the things that people leave behind," from buttons to cities.<sup>2</sup> In this brief presentation it will be impossible to deal with all aspects of material culture such as landscapes, cityscapes or architecture. Rather, it is intended to focus on three dimensional artifacts that are traditionally considered appropriate for museum collections, such as furniture, paintings, silver, pottery, etc.

As a starting point it is necessary to explore some of the reasons why the study of South Carolina material culture is behind that of other areas of the country. In the years following the Civil War, South Carolinians expended their scholarly efforts either attempting to explain the causes of the Civil War or in writing about the military campaigns and tactics of the war. Very little concentrated effort was made in identifying and researching the material objects of the state's history. In addition, because of the impoverished condition of the state until well into the twentieth century, no organization in South Carolina was in a position to spearhead material culture research.

A major prerequisite for meaningful material culture scholarship is the presence of a large body of artifacts that are properly authenticated, catalogued and accessible to the researcher. Until recently South Carolina has lagged well behind other states in the creation of properly staffed and funded museums that can act as repositories for these artifacts. In many other states the establishment of museums for the expressed purpose of collecting "things left behind" originated during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, the Arizona Historical Society was founded in 1884, twenty-eight years before Arizona was admitted to the Union. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin was organized in 1846 while the State Historical Society of Iowa was founded in 1857. Likewise in the South, many states began organized museums early in this century. The North Carolina State Museum was founded in 1903, the Louisiana State Museum in 1906, the Mississippi State Museum in 1902, and the Tennessee State Museum in 1937. Only a few organizations existed in South Carolina prior to 1960 that had any interest in preserving the state's material history. An overview of the history of these South Carolina organizations is enlightening.

The oldest historical oriented organization in South Carolina is the Charleston Library Society. Founded in 1748, primarily as a circulating library, over the years the Society has developed an important research collection of books and manuscripts, but has never been a repository for material culture artifacts. In its original charter, the Library Society envisioned itself as the initiator of a museum and a college, the present Charleston Museum and the College of Charleston.<sup>1</sup>

The Charleston Museum, which originated as a branch of the Charleston Library



Society, is not only the oldest museum in South Carolina but it is generally recognized as the oldest museum in the country. Founded in 1773, the Charleston Museum had several homes until 1907, when it took over the Thompson Auditorium on Rutledge Avenue. Shortly thereafter, the museum was formally chartered as part of the city government and was thus assured of some level of tax support. However, while the Charleston Museum has a lengthy history, it was only after World War I that the collections were extended to include South Carolina man-made artifacts. Prior to 1918, the focus of the museum was on its natural history and ethnographic collections. The creation in 1919 of the South Carolina Hall was the first major effort by the museum at collecting and exhibiting South Carolina material culture artifacts.<sup>4</sup> Since 1920 the museum has acquired significant collections of South Carolina objects, especially from the low-country of the state.

In April 1980, the Charleston Museum relocated to a new building on Meeting Street which provides proper protection for this important collection. Unfortunately, except for a few publications mentioned below, researchers of material culture have not taken advantage of this important resource.

The founding of the South Carolina Historical Society in 1855 saw the establishment of the first organization specifically devoted to collecting and preserving South Carolina material. The purpose of the Historical Society was "to collect information respecting every portion of our state, to preserve it, and when deemed advisable to publish it." Additionally, the Society encouraged "contributions of every sort . . . , traditions, legends, anecdotes of persons and places, letters, pictures, maps, songs, and ballads, all which may illustrate . . . social, political or ecclesiastical (life), our industry, our resources . . . ." From this statement it is apparent that the Historical Society's major purpose was collecting printed and written objects, not three dimensional artifacts. While the society does own some material culture artifacts, their function is to furnish and decorate the Fireproof Building, not to serve as a study collection for material culture research.

Like the other Charleston-related historical organizations, the Carolina Art Association was founded prior to the Civil War. From its beginnings in 1857, the Association's principal goal was "the promotion of the fine arts by means of public exhibitions in its gallery, by opening a school and a library for art, or by any other modes that may be deemed expedient by the Association."<sup>6</sup> By the late nineteenth century, the Association was actively collecting South Carolina paintings and sculpture. Currently the Carolina Art Association has an extensive collection of South Carolina fine arts, but its collection scope has never included traditional material culture artifacts.<sup>7</sup>

The first effort by the state government to preserve any of the state's history occurred in 1891 when the Public Record Commission was created primarily to obtain copies of documents in the British Public Record Office relating to South Carolina. Subsequently it became apparent that there was a need to consolidate the state's



“scattered records.” In 1894 the state established the Historical Commission of the State of South Carolina and this agency began receiving an annual appropriation in 1905.<sup>8</sup>

The first annual report of the Historical Commission in 1906 reflected the condition of the state records. After lamenting the fact that many of the state’s records had been sold to collectors and “historical societies throughout the country,” the report described the condition of the records:

Packed away in boxes and trunks, littered from the cellar to the garret of the State House, open to the waste and spoilation of workmen and idle visitors, and the more dangerous handling of collectors and vendors of old books and material it is a matter of marvel . . . that even so considerable remnant has been saved.<sup>9</sup>

While the primary purpose of the Historical Commission was to preserve the state’s records, it did dabble in collecting other artifacts. In its 1907 report the Commission did solicit “any historical material . . . whether in the shape of old deeds or papers or maps or plates or anything of the kind. In addition to this, the Commission is very anxious to obtain portraits of eminent sons of the state . . .” Also in 1906 the Secretary of State turned over to the Historical Commission the silver vase given to Andrew Jackson by the ladies of South Carolina commemorating his victory at the Battle of New Orleans.<sup>10</sup> Over the years the Historical Commission and its successor, the Department of Archives and History, has accepted artifacts given to the state because there was not another state supported organization actively collecting them. However, the primary function of this agency has been the collecting of state government records and documents, “and the due and orderly arrangement, indexing and preservation of the same . . .,” not the collecting of three dimensional objects.<sup>11</sup>

According to available records, the first organization to begin actively and purposefully collecting South Carolina material culture artifacts was the United Daughters of the Confederacy. In 1895 one of the earliest efforts of the Wade Hampton Chapter “was the establishment of the South Carolina Relic Room in the Library Building of the South Carolina University”. By 1897 the Relic Room had moved to the State House and in 1923 it began to receive state funds for “repairs and an Assistant Custodian”.<sup>12</sup> From 1960 to 1970 the Relic Room was housed in the Archives building until it acquired its present home in the War Memorial Building.

Like many early efforts, the primary objective of the Relic Room was to “find and save” artifacts. Limited funding and facilities prohibited an active research and publication program. Additionally, until recently, the focus of the Relic Room has been exclusively on the Confederate period. As a result, the other aspects of the



state's history did not have an active collecting program prior to 1960.

The last organization which was acquiring material artifacts before 1960 was the South Caroliniana Library. Founded in 1937 the South Caroliniana Society sought to preserve "South Carolina historical material" and to keep it in the state.<sup>13</sup> While the Society's main goal was the acquisition of manuscripts and books, its 1961 constitution did call for the acquisition, "when the Society deems proper, (of) articles and personal effects of outstanding persons and events."<sup>14</sup> However, the Society's collecting of artifacts was a minor role and was only pursued because no other organization was actively seeking these objects.

Without major collecting programs by South Carolina organizations, the lack of major study collections of material culture artifacts certainly limited the availability of resources for scholars. Since 1960 numerous organizations have been founded that are actively seeking and collecting these objects. However, while these new museums have continued to work with limited resources, many important South Carolina artifacts have gone out of state because museums in the state have not had the necessary financial resources to compete in the national market for highly sought after South Carolina collectibles. Even with these problems, however, great strides have been made in the past twenty years in acquiring objects for local museum collections. These museums now have the necessary artifacts to enable scholars to begin serious scholarship into the material culture of South Carolina.

A second factor impeding the growth of material culture studies in South Carolina is the lack of relevant library holdings. In addition to the artifacts themselves, material culture researchers must also rely on written sources such as mail order catalogs, trade publications and manufacturers supply catalogs. No substantial number of these publications is currently available in the repositories in the state. However, library holdings do include countless diaries, letters, newspapers, city directories, etc., which contain a wealth of primary information. Unfortunately, only in rare instances have these sources been utilized as sources for material culture studies.

While the lack of artifacts and primary written sources have been major drawbacks to material culture research in South Carolina, there is a third factor which also needs to be explored. The methodology used in studying artifacts is different from that used by the traditional academic historian who works primarily with documents and books. The study of objects requires a completely different set of skills and knowledge which has not traditionally been part of an academic historian's training. In researching artifacts the scholar must be familiar with such variables as construction techniques, materials, decorative motifs and styles and function. Additionally, the verification of the authenticity and provenance of an object requires a different methodology. Whereas the traditional historian works with available sources to draw conclusions about past events, the material culture student is presented with an object and must learn as much as possible from that object.<sup>15</sup>



For example, in 1979 the State Museum was offered as a gift a quilt from Laurens County which, according to the donor, was partially made by Andrew Johnson in 1824. A quick check of biographies of Johnson verified that he did live in Laurens in 1824 and 1825. Additional research turned up several articles from the early part of this century that related the history of the quilt. To further verify the authenticity of the quilt, the researcher must turn from the documents to a careful study of the quilt itself. It is from this point that the researcher must rely on knowledge gained from the study of similar artifacts. It is necessary to determine if the style, decorative motifs, material and workmanship are consistent with other known examples from the state during this time. Examination verified that the physical properties of the quilt were consistent with the provenance and the quilt was undoubtedly made about 1825.

However, there was no primary documentary evidence to prove that Andrew Johnson helped make the quilt. Frequently information provided by donors is distorted as the artifact has passed from generation to generation. In this instance, however, all of the other facts from the donor were verified by either documentary evidence or the physical examination of the quilt. It is highly unlikely that positive proof will ever be located. Because all of the other facts can be verified and it cannot be proved that Johnson did not make the quilt, one must accept the oral tradition associated with the quilt as being correct.

The lack of scholars with the necessary background skills to identify and verify artifacts impeded the growth of a body of scholarship in South Carolina material culture studies. The lack of large collections of artifacts and the scarcity of material culture scholars helps explain why it has only been in recent years that progress has been made in this area.

The three problems outlined above, specifically the lack of substantial collections, the lack of trained material culture scholars and the paucity of primary documentary material has inhibited meaningful research and publication in South Carolina material culture studies. Both J. Harold Easterby's bibliography and Lewis Jones' **Books and Articles on South Carolina History** include numerous works that can be classified as material culture studies.<sup>16</sup> However, the majority of these titles are descriptive, dealing principally with a catalog type listing, rather than being interpretive in nature. While many of these sources provide valuable descriptive information they do not delve into questions such as the verification of authenticity based on examination of a large number of documented artifacts. For example, Anna Wells Rutledge's pioneering work **Artists in the Life of Charleston** is based heavily on newspaper sources and identifies most of the artists who worked in Charleston before 1865. However, there is very little information to assist in helping identify the characteristics, techniques, or style of a given artist.<sup>17</sup>

While there has not been a large number of published works dealing with South Carolina material culture topics, there are several studies which are valuable



pioneering works in the field. The studies referred to below are by no means all inclusive, but represent some of the most useful reference works available.

When reviewing the field of South Carolina material culture scholarship, the most prominent name is that of E. Milby Burton. As director of the Charleston Museum for 40 years, Burton published numerous articles and books. Burton's **South Carolina Silversmiths, 1690-1860**, published in 1942, identifies through maker's marks, newspaper advertisements, wills, diaries and journals silversmiths and their active dates in the state.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, Burton examined hundreds of examples of South Carolina silver and many of his conclusions are based on these comparisons. While new information has been uncovered in the last 40 years on individual silversmiths, Burton's work is still the standard reference work on South Carolina silversmiths.

Burton's **Charleston Furniture, 1700-1825**, published in 1955, is the best work on any aspect of South Carolina furniture. Not only does Burton identify cabinet-makers through advertisements, journals and wills, but he also examined hundreds of examples of Charleston made furniture, some of which contained original labels. By utilizing comparisons of style, materials and construction techniques Burton was able to identify and classify many unmarked pieces of Charleston made furniture. Most importantly his work provided a criteria for examining and attributing other possible pieces of Charleston furniture.<sup>19</sup> Since the publication of **Charleston Furniture**, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts has completed an extensive field study of Charleston furniture. While several new discoveries have increased our knowledge concerning Charleston cabinetmakers, Burton's work is still the most comprehensive published resource.

In addition to Burton's two general works there are several books on South Carolina artists that are interpretive in nature. Among these are Helen Kohn Hennig's biography of William H. Scarborough and Margaret S. Middleton's study of Henrietta Johnston of Charleston.<sup>20</sup> A much needed comprehensive study of Charleston miniaturist Charles Fraser has just been published by the Carolina Art Association.<sup>21</sup> There are several other works on specific artists that are also useful, but are not as interpretive as the ones mentioned above.

While there are several useful studies of South Carolina artists, this is the only area where any significant work has been accomplished. Other South Carolina material culture topics have not been researched in depth and have relied on tradition or scanty research resulting in incorrect or inadequate conclusions. There are several notable topics which have not received proper research and subsequent publication.

Perhaps South Carolina's most significant example of material culture is Edgefield pottery. Produced by numerous craftsmen during the mid-nineteenth century in Edgefield district, their alkaline glazed product is highly sought after by collectors and museums around the world. While some work has been completed on a



few of the individual potters, a comprehensive, interpretive study on Edgefield pottery is still needed.

Even though there are hundreds of quilts in museum collections across the state, there are no published works on quilts or quiltmaking in South Carolina. While Burton's work adequately deals with Charleston furniture, virtually no research has been done on up-country or piedmont furniture.

A final area which needs the attention of careful scholarship is the state's military history. Except for Jack A. Meyer's publication on the Palmetto Armory there is no published work on any of South Carolina's weapon manufacturers.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, except for a series of prints by the Company of Military Historians, there is a total lack of research on South Carolina militia uniforms, weaponry and accoutrements. Even with the emphasis South Carolinians have traditionally placed on the Civil War, very little work has been done on the material culture aspects of that period. For example, where can one go to try and find out the difference between a period confederate uniform and one that was made for a confederate reunion?

Even though publications on South Carolina material culture are limited, recent developments indicate that future research will fill many current gaps. Since 1960 the number of city and county museums has increased dramatically, meaning much larger collections of artifacts are available to researchers. During the 1970's the organization of the McKissick Museums at the University of South Carolina and the creation of the South Carolina State Museum, both of which are involved in material culture research and publication, has initiated a scholarly interest in this area. Furthermore, the establishment of the Applied History program at the University of South Carolina in 1975 has produced students trained in material culture research techniques. Working with local museums these students have produced a number of worthwhile research reports.

However, the research that still needs to be completed is monumental. Now that the resources are at hand and properly trained scholars are actively working in this area, perhaps we will be able to produce more historians of chairs who will one day fill chairs of history.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas J. Schlereth, ed., **Material Culture Studies in America**, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), p. XIV.

<sup>2</sup>Leland Ferguson, "Historical Archeology and the Importance of Material Things," (Columbia: Society for Historical Archeology, 1977), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Anna King Gregorie, "The First Decade of the Charleston Library Society," **Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association**, 1935, 3-5.



<sup>4</sup>William G. Mazyck, "The Charleston Museum, Its Genesis and Development," *Yearbook City of Charleston*, 1907, (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1908), appendix, 13-51; Caroline M. Borowsky, "The Charleston Museum," *Museum News*, February, 1963, 11-21.

<sup>5</sup>David Moltke-Hansen and Sallie Doscher, *South Carolina Historical Society Manuscript Guide*, (Charleston: South Carolina Historical Society, 1979).

<sup>6</sup>*Constitution of the Carolina Art Association Established 1857, with the Rules for the Government of the Executive Board and Names of the Officers, 1905*, (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1905).

<sup>7</sup>*Selections from the Collection of the Carolina Art Association*, (Charleston: Carolina Art Association, 1977), 4-7.

<sup>8</sup>In 1915 the name was shortened to the Historical Commission of South Carolina.

<sup>9</sup>*Report of the Historical Commission of South Carolina to the General Assembly of South Carolina at the Regular Session of 1906*. (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1906), 5-6.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.* Also *Report of the Historical Commission, 1907*. The vase was originally left to the State in Andrew Jackson's will.

<sup>11</sup>*Report of the Historical Commission, 1948-1949*.

<sup>12</sup>Mrs. Claude Girardeau and Mrs. Thornley Walker, compilers, "South Carolina Confederate Relic Room of Wade Hampton Chapter, U.D.C., 1924. (Pamphlet in South Caroliniana Library).

<sup>13</sup>Robert L. Meriwether, *University South Caroliniana Society Report of the Secretary and Treasurer, 1937*. (Pamphlet in South Caroliniana Library).

<sup>14</sup>"Constitution of the University South Caroliniana Society," 1961. (Manuscript copy at South Caroliniana Library).

<sup>15</sup>For a detailed discussion of methodology see Charles F. Montgomery, "The Connoisseurship of Artifacts," 143-152; and E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," 162-173, in Schlereh, ed. *Material Culture Studies in America*.

<sup>16</sup>J. Harold Easterby, *Guide to the Study and Reading of South Carolina History A General Classified Bibliography with a Supplement A Selected List of Books and Reprints of Books on South Carolina History Published Since 1950* by Noel Polk. (Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company Publishers, 1975), 187-191; Lewis P. Jones, *Books and Articles on South Carolina History*. (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1970).

<sup>17</sup>Anna Wells Rutledge, *Artists in the Life of Charleston, through colony and state, from restoration to reconstruction*. (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1949). Transactions of the American Philosophical Society Vol. XXXIX, part 2.

<sup>18</sup>E. Milby Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths 1690-1860*. Contributions from the Charleston Museum, X (Charleston: The Charleston Museum, 1942).

<sup>19</sup>E. Milby Burton, *Charleston Furniture, 1700-1825*. Contributions from the Charleston Museum XII, (Charleston: The Charleston Museum, 1955).

<sup>20</sup>Helen Kohn Hennig, *A Parade of the Living Past William Harrison Scarborough* (Columbia: The R. L. Bryan Co., 1937); Margaret S. Middleton, *Henrietta Johnston of Charleston, South Carolina: America's First Pastellist* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966).



<sup>21</sup>Martha R. Severens and Charles L. Wyrick, Jr. editors, **Charles Fraser of Charleston Essay on the Man, His Art and His Times** (Charleston: Carolina Art Association, 1983).

<sup>22</sup>Jack A. Meyer, **William Glaze and the Palmetto Armory**, South Carolina State Museum bulletin number 6, (Columbia: South Carolina State Museum, 1982).



## **REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND 1919--1921**

**Arthur Mitchell**

In January 1919 an assembly was formed in Dublin, Ireland which claimed to be the political authority of that country. This assertion was based on popular support as attested by the 1918 general election in which the supporters of Irish independence won seventy percent of the parliamentary seats in Ireland. The assembly, Dail Eireann, declared that Ireland was an independent state with a republican form of government. This paper will examine how successful were the efforts of this body to make effective its claims.

The Irish independence movement employed four methods in working towards its objective. First, it participated in open, legal political activity--organization, meetings, literature and elections. It also employed physical force; its military force, the Irish Volunteers (or Irish Republican Army) was not a conventional military organization but a secret, underground body that employed (and developed) guerilla warfare. Thirdly, the movement sought to obstruct and render ineffective the existing civil administration of the country. Lastly, it created an alternative government and administration.

World War I provided the opportunity and stimulus for a concerted, and as time was to show, decisive effort to attain self-government in Ireland. Before 1914 the campaign to achieve even a limited form of self-government (home rule) had foundered on the reluctance of British opinion to agree to the establishment of any separate Irish political identity, the legalities of the British constitution and the opposition of Irish supporters of continued union with Britain, centered in the northern province of Ulster.

With the outbreak of war in 1914 the advocates of physical force, led by the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood, drew two apparently sensible conclusions. The peaceful, constitutional movement had failed to deliver the goods, defeated by its own moderation and its collaboration in the British parliamentary system: thus it was now time for a new birth of physical force. The second conclusion it drew was that the best time to employ violence was during a period of mass violence. This group, therefore, determined that it would act while the war was on. In the end, it persisted in this, even when the most it could mount was little more than a protest in arms. They were satisfied that even a mini-revolt would have the basically same destabilizing effect in Ireland that the mass violence was having on the continent.

So the rebellion of April 1916, although easily contained and suppressed by British forces, transformed the political situation in Ireland. The bulk of the Irish people shifted from numbed, restrained observance of the European conflict to admiration of the courage and dedication of the rebels and, eventually, to excited support for militant Irish nationalism.



In the course of the war both sides claimed to be the champions of peoples suppressed by their opponents; this caused some stirring among the subject nationalities. But it was the entrance of the United States that greatly increased the atmosphere of political aspiration. Woodrow Wilson's phrases about making the world safe for democracy and the right of every people to self-determination sounded in Irish ears as siren songs ideally suited to their national objectives. The world was moving their way.

Two organizations to lead the way to self-government were shaped in the aftermath of the rebellion; they both took final form in October 1917. First, the Irish Volunteers was revived and greatly expanded. Its objective was an independent republic; this organization grew to achieve the status of a peoples' militia, a people's army.

The political side of the movement also took form, creating an umbrella organization under the banner of Sinn Fein. The Sinn Fein party had been organized before the war as a body committed to passive resistance and the creation of alternative institutions of government. When the 1916 rebellion was labeled the Sinn Fein rebellion by the press, militant nationalists regrouped within that body. They saw the methods proposed by the old Sinn Fein party as a useful supplement to physical force. The new party was, in fact, a coalition, with the old leaders, particularly Arthur Griffith, reluctantly agreeing to accept the new objective of an independent republic. On the other hand, the party maintained its essentially capitalist outlook on economic matters. Although it supported a moderately expanded role for government in socio- and economic matters, it argued that the underlining problems were caused by foreign control. This posture was appropriate to and derived from Irish public opinion. Even within the labor movement there was little active support for any radical (say Socialist) departure from the assumptions of liberal capitalism.

The two radical nationalist organizations, the Volunteers and Sinn Fein, were separate bodies, but with overlapping leaders and members and were tied tenuously together by an individual who was president of both bodies. Eamon deValera, the senior (there was only one other) surviving commandant of the 1916 rising, was a suitable common symbol for Irish republicanism.

By the time the war ended all Europe was saturated by Allied, mainly American, propaganda about freedom, democracy and self-determination. This was an ideal time for Sinn Fein to take the field in a general election; it had already achieved great success in a series of by-elections. Lloyd George and his Coalition partners, eager to gain an easy victory in Britain, provided the opportunity. In its platform, Sinn Fein gave little emphasis to republicanism; rather it declared its intention to establish a constituent assembly as the supreme national authority. It gave principal attention to the assertion of the right to national self-determination and to appealing Ireland's case to the post-war peace conference (whose principal participant would be



Woodrow Wilson, champion of self-determination.)<sup>1</sup>

In the election of December 1918 Sinn Fein won a crushing victory over the home rule party, although it made no inroads in the Unionist areas of Ulster. Having won a clear majority of seats in Ireland, Sinn Fein proceeded to put its program into operation. In part due to the absence of essentially moderate leaders (then under arrest), but largely due to the deep commitment of the militants in both the military and political bodies, Sinn Fein went beyond establishing merely a constituent assembly to the declaration of an independent republic. To the opponents of Sinn Fein this action was simply a foolhardy gesture of defiance, a propagandist posturing without substance, but the men of the rebel republic eventually were to confound their critics.<sup>2</sup>

Given the hyperbolic political atmosphere of the time, it is inconceivable that Sinn Fein would not attempt to bring Ireland's case to the Versailles conference. In its eyes, the country had an iron-clad case for self-determination. When it failed to make any impact on the allied representatives, there was disappointment and dismay in its ranks, but rejection at Versailles probably strengthened support for Irish independence. It roused a feeling of righteous indignation in the country. In any case, the Sinn Fein leadership responded to this rebuff by turning to two other avenues of activity--carrying the case of Irish freedom to the United States and the creation of an alternative government at home.

The government it established in January 1919, titled Dail Eireann, was parliamentary in form. Despite the exhortations of Sinn Fein journalists that a system should be developed that was not based on the British model, the founders of the new state decided to rely on that which they knew. In doing so they demonstrated political prudence: it would be hard enough to rally public support for the new government without providing their opponents with material for satire by establishing an innovative system of representative government. As well, there was no substantial opposition to parliamentary government as such.<sup>3</sup>

In regard to the socio-economic orientation, the rebel regime was mildly reformist within the parameters of liberal capitalism. At its first meeting it adopted a 'Democratic Programme', a statement of principles which anticipated an expanded role for government in the economy and the elevation of social and educational standards. Of course, the immediate post-war period was a time of high-flown declarations of social and economic aspirations and proposals. Dail Eireann obviously felt the need to at least match the promises of the British Government in this regard. As well, it was prepared to launch pilot schemes in housing, land purchase, fisheries and cooperative enterprise. Beyond this it did not go.<sup>4</sup>

There were many constraints on the Dail government's freedom of action. Initially it was lack of money; then came repression by British forces. As well, Dail Eireann had to take note of the Catholic Church, very few of whose leaders lent any



support to the rebel government. The Irish Church was conservative, but moderately so; the bishops did make a few positive statements about the need to raise living standards by means of consumer and producer cooperatives and such; the Dail went no further than this lead.<sup>5</sup> In addition the Dail would get nowhere without the financial support of nationalists with money, principally farmers and small businessmen. The taint of radicalism would shut off this vital source. A strong, committed social and economic programme would expose the fledgling government to charges that it was heading towards socialism and Bolshevism. There was considerable press commentary at first that its ally, the labor movement, was directing its policies in a collectivist direction. Finally, Dail Eireann, like its parent Sinn Fein, was not a social or economic movement; it was almost entirely concerned with nationalism.

In its first few months Dail Eireann had to rely on propaganda to tell the world it indeed was a government. At the same time it prepared a program of action. By June 1919 it was ready to proceed. Eamon deValera, now President of Dail Eireann, went to the United States where he generated public support for Irish independence and raised a publicly subscribed loan.<sup>6</sup> At home the Dail passed a legislative program which set out to create a rival system of administration, encourage fishing and forestry, form arbitration courts and investigate the country's resources. It also approved a "decree" concerning land that was certainly broad in scope but equally vague about implementation: "The provision of land for the agricultural population now deprived thereof is decreed, and a Loan Fund under the authority of Dail may be established to aid this purpose."<sup>7</sup>

Diarmuid O'Hegarty, the head of the embryonic civil service, reflected the general feeling of the movement when he wrote to the Dail representative in Paris:

I am personally very glad that this side of the business is being taken up in a definite fashion. Actual constructive work will leave a bigger mark on people than **political** work. It makes them think more, and besides it invests the **Government** with tangibility as such. It means that the Dail has stepped away from the beaten path of political parties and their shibboleths, and that it is functioning as any progressive Government would be expected to function.<sup>8</sup>

Having informed the public of what it intended to do, the Dail launched a loan campaign in Ireland. Its objective was £250,000 (the same amount raised by the anti-conscription campaign in 1918). At this point, in September 1919, having waited in vain for the humiliating collapse in shrieks of Irish laughter of its presumptuous rival, the British administration in Ireland acted, declaring Dail Eireann and its support organizations illegal bodies.<sup>9</sup> Within a year it was the British administration that was humiliated, surrounded by troops and police but devoid of substantial public support.



The banning of the Dail was not its end but really its making. Driving it underground was generally to its advantage. Now Dublin Castle (the British administration in Ireland) would only have the vaguest idea what the Dail was doing. As well, the leaders of the Dail, through their membership in the Irish volunteers, Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, had a wealth of experience in operating in conditions of illegality, harassment and repression. Rather than just barely hanging on, the Dail administration continued to grow, increasing its number of employees, extending its programs and broadening its control of government. Its loan drive rolled to success, achieving its goal of £250,000 in June 1920 and growing to £372,000 when it was ended in September. "The British Government are out after the Loan-neck or nothing," Diarmuid O'Hegarty wrote to his Paris correspondent, "But the Loan goes merrily on. They appear to have gone into a blue funk about it, but they cannot stop its progress. Their activities so far have been an asset." Not that all went smoothly with the loan drive; Michael Collins, who as Finance Minister directed the effort, wrote privately: "This enterprise will certainly break my heart. I never imagined there was so much cowardice, dishonesty, hedging, insincerity and meanness in the world." But the loan was a success.<sup>10</sup>

What was the public perception of the rebel government? At the beginning most of the public probably shared the scepticism and doubt of the press concerning its viability and longevity. But when Dail Eireann demonstrated that it was serious in its intentions, there was a shift towards appreciation and respect. P. S. O'Hegarty, a prominent Sinn Fein journalist, has written that "nothing was more remarkable...than the way in which, month after month, the number of people giving allegiance to the Irish Government, accepting it, and recognizing that British Government in Ireland was over, grew."<sup>11</sup> One hundred fifty thousand persons subscribed to the loan. In the local government elections of January and June 1920 Sinn Fein and its allies won a majority of seats in the country. There was widespread public support for the court system established by the Dail in the Summer of 1920. When in May 1921 the British Government staged elections for a twenty-six county home rule parliament for what it termed "Southern Ireland," Sinn Fein won every seat unopposed.<sup>12</sup>

The opponents of Sinn Fein charged that the Irish public was not supporting the rebel government but was being driven into consent and neutrality by the pressure of the Irish Republican Army. The Dail's relationship with the I.R.A. was of crucial importance in the struggle for self-government. The military organization predated the existence of the rebel regime, and the relationship initially was distant. DeValera told the Dail in April 1919, "The Minister of National Defense is, of course, in close association with the voluntary forces which are the foundation of the National Army." But the said minister, Cathal Brugha, was determined to subordinate the I.R.A. to the authority of the Dail. Upon his motion, the Dail voted to require an oath of allegiance "To the Irish Republic and to the Dail." Although there was some reluctance by I.R.B. members, the oath was subscribed to by almost all I.R.A. men over the next few months. There was considerable overlapping between the



leadership of the I.R.A. and the Dail. Two members of the army's headquarters staff were also cabinet ministers and several unit commanders were also members of the Dail.<sup>13</sup>

By necessity the I.R.A. had decentralized control; initiative was in the hands of local commanders. The headquarters staff maintained constant communications, issuing regulations and requiring reports. One I.R.A. local leader, burdened with the paperwork demanded by headquarters, commented that "we started the war with hurleys, and, by God, we'll finish it with fountain pens."<sup>24</sup> The general posture of the headquarters staff was simply to urge greater and greater activity on the part of the local units.<sup>15</sup>

The Dail seldom discussed the activities of the I.R.A. and its campaign of violence. It appeared to some that the Dail did not accept responsibility for the actions of the guerilla movement. Arthur Giffith, the acting president of the Dail while deValera was in America, had long been known as a supporter of passive resistance. Two months after his return from the United States, in March 1921, deValera told the Dail that it "was hardly acting fairly by the army in not publicly taking full responsibility for all its acts." The assembly responded by giving the president authority to state publicly that the army was the official instrument of the Dail.<sup>16</sup>

Then there was the question of the Irish Unionists, most of whom were concentrated in four counties in northeast Ulster. Irish nationalism had no attraction for them, and they were not brought over by statements that their civil and religious liberties would be protected under Dail Eireann. Sinn Fein presented itself as a democratic, non-sectarian movement. Yet the Dail made no specific appeal to the Northern Unionists. There was one proposal that a strong labor program might attract support from the Belfast working class, but the idea received no response in the Dail. It appears that Dail Eireann and its leaders were fully preoccupied with trying to assert its authority in most of the country to be able to give serious consideration to the Ulster Unionists. When sectarian rioting broke out in Belfast during the Summer of 1920 and a large number of nationalists were driven out of their homes, the Dail was forced to turn its attention to the north. But its response was entirely negative: it imposed a boycott on products from that city (hoping to put economic pressure on its manufacturers, almost all of whom were unionists).<sup>17</sup>

From the beginning the Dail government, for its own survival, plotted the destruction of the organization that most seriously threatened it--the Royal Irish Constabulary. In April 1919 the Dail declared that the members of this police force were to "be ostracized socially by the people of Ireland." DeValera declared that the force was composed of "spies in our midst" who were the "eyes and ears of the enemy." This policy, which appears to have been increasingly observed by the public, was followed by a concerted campaign to get R.I.C. men to resign from the force.<sup>18</sup>



Then the I.R.A. launched a broadly-based campaign of attack, which resulted in the deaths of scores of policemen, seizures of arms and the destruction of police stations. When it became apparent that the days of British rule were drawing to an end, resignations increased and recruitment plummeted. By the Summer of 1920 the R.I.C. was isolated and demoralized. Police power passed into the hands of the I.R.A. and its rudimentary police force.

By the Fall of 1920 the revolutionary government of Dail Eireann had adequate finance for its limited, but not insignificant program. The internal Dail loan brought in L372,000, with another L55,000 being contributed to the Self-Determination Fund. Just as this source of revenue was ending, funds from the loan campaign in the United States began to pour in. Of the five million dollars raised in the U.S., one million had been received in Dublin by the time the fighting ended in July 1921. Moreover, the Dail's money was almost entirely secure. An attempt by Dublin Castle to locate the funds ended in a bloody response by the I.R.A., with only L23,000 being seized by the British authorities.

The Dail was slow to spend its money. In the period from 1 May to 31 December 1920 its income was L356,000 but it expended only L279,000 (with L200,000 being expended to provide capital for the Dail-sponsored Land Bank). The estimate of expenses for the first six months of 1921 was L186,000, but only L111,000 was spent. This situation was created by the under-developed state of its administrative structure as well as the repressive actions of the British forces. But financial restraint was strongly advocated by Michael Collins, who was responsible for the creation of large reserve funds in both Ireland and the United States. The leaders of Dail Eireann were planning for a prolonged struggle.<sup>19</sup>

The great challenge to the authority of the Dail government came not from Dublin Castle but from the land agitation in the West of Ireland. In the Spring of 1920 land seizures occurred along the western area. Art O'Connor, the Minister of Agriculture, has graphically described the situation:

Power, actual and moral, was passing from the British Authorities in Ireland into the hands of the Government of the Republic, but in those days it was in a state of flight and had not yet taken definite rest in its new home.

The British were either so frightened or paralysed or unable to read the sign of the times that they suddenly ceased to perform the ordinary civil functions of administering law and keeping order. The Dail itself seemed overwhelmed by the suddenness with which the responsibility of Government had been thrust upon it and for a while it seemed to shrink from its duties as one shrinks from the fulfillment of an unexpected joy. During the Winter of 1919 in Ireland government seemed the stand stock-still. Over Leinster and the greater



portion of Munster order was kept though there was no one to enforce it. Each side was, as it were, taking a long breath for the struggle for mastery which was bound to come. Only in the West, in Clare and parts of Kerry was the land war producing such a storm as would ultimately rouse the Dail from its lethargy like an angry mother to punish an unruly child. The majority of the people though they drank deeply of the draught of freedom kept their heads but in the West they were hungry--hungry for land--and easily intoxicated with the wine which they drank to the dregs.<sup>20</sup>

The Dail responded by appointing special land commissioners to investigate claims and ordering the I.R.A. to put a halt to seizures. From there the Dail proceeded to what probably was its most successful venture--a system of alternative courts, which assumed civil and criminal jurisdiction in most of the country by the fall of 1920.<sup>21</sup>

Together with this activity and its success in the local government elections of January and June 1920, the Dail could rightly claim to be the government of the country. The growing power of the revolutionary government was widely observed in the British press. An article in the **Daily Herald** in November 1919 declared: "This invisible Republic, with its hidden courts and its prohibited volunteer troops, exists in the hearts of the men and women of Ireland, and wields a moral authority which all the tanks and machine guns of King George cannot command." The **London Globe** observed in May 1920 that "in the struggle between Sinn Fein and the King's Government, Sinn Fein is winning all along the line." Two months later the **Times** of London drew the same conclusion.<sup>22</sup>

This situation finally forced the British Government to make a concentrated response. With a new administrative team installed in Dublin Castle in the spring of 1920, an effort was made to reassert British civil authority. The Dail courts were driven underground and local government disrupted. The army was re-enforced and re-equipped. To prop up the R.I.C., British recruits were admitted. Martial law, internment without trial, executions, terror, reprisals, shooting and burning, did not cripple the I.R.A. or cow the Dail leadership. While the British Government maintained an official position that it would continue repressive action against rebellion, Lloyd George had a special representative, Andrew Cope, who was given the task of approaching the leaders of the alternative government to seek basis of a settlement. In the end these efforts did not restore British authority in Ireland, but they severely circumscribed the Dail campaign to supplant it.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the efforts of Dublin Castle, the Dail and its government remained in being. No meeting of the Dail or its cabinet was discovered or substantially disrupted. The Dail only met twenty-one times in the two and one half year period from its establishment to the truce of July 1921 (and only eight times from its suppression in



September 1919 to the truce). To some critics this revolutionary assembly was little more than a rubberstamp, propagandist body, but propaganda was one of the reasons for its being. Given the difficulty of arranging meetings, as well as the fact that a majority of members were either under arrest or were in the United States, there was a reasonable measure of debate in the Dail. As well, this being a one-party parliament, there was general agreement within it concerning policy.

The Dail's leadership managed to maintain continuity and control. The cabinet held seventy-seven meetings during the revolutionary period. The Dail government had nineteen executive positions which were held by thirty-one individuals over the two and one half year period. Arrested ministers and officials were quickly replaced from a pool of talented and generally able members of the Dail. The key men--Collins, Minister of Finance, Brugha, Minister of Defense, and deValera evaded arrest throughout the struggle, although their administrative activities were sometimes disrupted. Dublin Castle could not discover and destroy the Dail administration although it was all around it.

By the Spring of 1921 stalemate had been reached. British forces could not destroy the I.R.A., which itself could do no more than it had already done to uproot British authority in the country. The British administration could not regain public support or consent, yet it did prevent the Dail government from operating effectively in many areas. Public opinion in Britain increasingly was opposed to Government policy in Ireland, while many people were also hoping for an end to the conflict. It was time, finally, for negotiations.

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<sup>1</sup>F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (London, 1971), pp. 380-464.

<sup>2</sup>Brian Farrell, *The Founding of Dail Eireann, Parliament and Nation Building* (Dublin, 1971), pp. 45-50.

<sup>3</sup>J.L. McCracken, *Representatives Government in Ireland; a Study of Dail Eireann, 1919-48* (London 1958), pp. 19-34.

<sup>4</sup>*Dail Eireann Proceedings, 1919-1921*, (21 January 1919) 21-23. (17 June 1919), 114-15.

<sup>5</sup>David Miller, *Church, State and Nation in Ireland, 1898-1921* (Dublin, 1973), pp. 201-84.

<sup>6</sup>Patrick McCartan, *With DeValera in America* (Dublin, 1932); Charles C. Tansill, *America and the Fight for Irish Freedom, 1866-1922* (New York, 1957), pp. 312-96.

<sup>7</sup>*Dail Eireann Proceedings*, (18 June 1919), 120-123.

<sup>8</sup>Diarmuid O'Hegarty to George Gavan Duffy, 27 August 1919, George Gavan Duffy Papers, private collection.

<sup>9</sup>Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic* (London, 1968 ed.), pp. 290-97.



<sup>10</sup>**Dail Eireann Proceedings**, (29 June 1920) p. 182.; Dail Eireann, Department of Finance report, dated 21 January 1921. State Paper Office, Dublin; Diarmuid O'Hegarty to Sean T. O'Kelly, 9 October 1919, G.G. Duffy Papers, private collection.

<sup>11</sup>Patrick S. O'Hegarty, **The Victory of Sinn Fein** (Dublin, 1924), p. 35.

<sup>12</sup>McCracken, **Representative Government in Ireland**, pp. 47-48.

<sup>13</sup>Kevin B. Nowlan, "Dail Eireann and the Army: Unity and Division (1919-1921)", in T.D. Williams, ed., **The Irish Struggle, 1916-1926** (Toronto, 1966), pp. 67-78.

<sup>14</sup>Comment of Sean Moylan quoted in Jacqueline Van Voris, **Constance de Markievicz, in the Cause of Ireland** (Amherst, Mass. 1967), p. 297.

<sup>15</sup>Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7/A, University College, Dublin Archives.

<sup>16</sup>**Dail Eireann Proceedings**, (11 March 1921) pp. 278-79.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 266-67.

<sup>18</sup>**Dail Eireann Proceedings**, (10 April 1919) pp. 67-69.; "Resignations and Retirements from Irish Police Force", D.E. 2/87, State Papers Office, Dublin.

<sup>19</sup>**Dail Eireann Proceedings**, (27 October 1919), p. 159; Cabinet Minutes, 10 October 1919; State Paper Office, Dublin; Ministry of Finance report, G.G. Duffy Papers, Ms. 15,439, National Library of Ireland.

<sup>20</sup>Dail Eireann, "A Brief Survey of the Work Done by the Agricultural Department from April 1919 to August 1921", D.E. 2/64, State Paper Office, Dublin.

<sup>21</sup>Dail Eireann, **The Constructive Work of Dail Eireann; No. 1; The National Police and Courts of Justice** (Dublin, 1921); Conor A. Maguire, "The Republican Courts", **Capuchin Annual**, 1969, pp. 378-88.

<sup>22</sup>D.G. Boyce, **Englishmen and Irish Troubles; British Public Opinion and the Making of Irish Policy, 1918-1922** (Cambridge, Mass. 1972), pp. 43-141.

<sup>23</sup>Charles Towhshend, **The British Campaign in Ireland, 1919-1921** (Oxford, 1975).



## THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISHES OF ENGLAND FOR THE POOR, 1640-1660

Linda Hayner

As early as 1388 the government of England passed laws to control the poor. At first such acts demanded only that each "sturdy beggar" and vagabond return to his place of birth where it was assumed he would find either work or aid.<sup>1</sup> It was not until 1547 that the government of Edward VI imposed the appointment in each parish of collectors of alms. Though alms-giving was voluntary in principle, any person refusing a weekly contribution to the poor could be bound by the bishop to appear at the next Quarter Sessions or pay a £10 fine. A recalcitrant alms-giver could even be sent to prison. It became apparent that voluntary alms were inadequate, so in 1563 Parliament required each parish inhabitant to be assessed and rated towards the care of the poor. This law was generally ineffective, but it did provide the model for that of 1597 which set up a compulsory poor rate and placed the responsibility for the destitute directly on the parish.<sup>2</sup>

Historians have questioned the ability of the parish vestries to disburse rates to the best advantage of the poor and with the least expense to the parish. Could the vestry find those who needed help and get it to them? How well would they supply the needs of the poor? Would the vestry simply tuck the poor away in some London hospital or almshouse and forget them? Certainly during the Civil Wars and Interregnum it would have been easy to ignore the parish's responsibilities or do the bare minimum required by law. To discover the effectiveness of the vestries in fulfilling their obligations, a study was made of the vestry records of ten London parishes over a twenty-year period, 1640-1660. During these years, the vestries had virtually no external direction from either the Anglican Church or Parliament, and had to be self-motivating in the matter of caring for the poor.

Caring for the parish poor meant provision of all of their needs including coal, food, clothing, housing, medical care, pensions and numerous incidentals. To efficiently provide each of the poor with the needs of the moment, the vestry appointed overseers of the poor whose duty it was to seek out the parish poor and see that provision was made for each need.

Coal was among the most important commodities provided by the parish, especially to the ill and elderly. If they survived the cold, damp winters, there were still cool and often damp, sunless days in summer to endure. The churchwardens of St. Dunstan in the East and St. Margaret New Fish Street purchased coal during the summer months against the rising prices of winter and stored it for later distribution.<sup>3</sup> When coal was unavailable, the vestries purchased wood or peat. The average cost to the parishes is difficult to estimate since the Civil Wars and piracy along England's coast by the Dutch caused serious shortages of coal from Newcastle and high prices. In 1642 a bushel of coal cost over fifteen pence rather than three and one-half pence during a time of normal supply.<sup>4</sup>



Most parishes also distributed bread and cheese to the poor. The vestry minutes show that wealthier vestries provided more food for a greater number and that the poorer the parishioner, the more he received. Goody Pulliard, living in the parish of St. James Garlickhithe, received only two pounds of bread every Sunday along with her three-pence pension. Some poorer pensioners of the wealthier parish of St. Bartholomew Exchange received four one-penny loaves and a half-pound portion of cheese.<sup>5</sup> In the parishes of St. Botolph Billingsgate and St. Michael Cornhill the recipients were obliged to attend Sunday services or forfeit their food. The parishes bore much of the expense, but individual bequests and gifts augmented the available funds. The expense to a populous parish could be considerable. A one-pound loaf cost one penny and one pound of cheese cost four pence. St. Bride Fleet Street at one time owed its baker L48.<sup>6</sup>

Another gift given as occasion demanded was that of clothing. Old Abraham Underwood received ten shillings from St. Pancras Soper Lane to buy shirts. St. Bartholomew Exchange provided money for clothing for two maiden pensioners. In St. Michael Cornhill twelve poor people of the parish received clothing every St. Luke's Day, 18 October, from a bequest of 1586.<sup>7</sup> Few parishes record a regular donation of clothing to the poor and depended upon occasional gifts and the poor box to supply garments as the needs became known. Keeping pensioners clothed was a problem compounded by their occasional pawning of their garments. St. Bartholomew gave Mrs. Chandler twenty shillings, Ann Conway thirty-seven shillings, and Widow Thame fourteen shillings to redeem their clothing from pawn. St. Michael gave Sexton John King money for the same purpose.<sup>8</sup> It appears that recovering clothing from a pawn shop was cheaper than replacing it.

Most of the problems of caring for the poor were insignificant beside that of providing housing for them. The demand of London's growing population for dwellings forced the poor to depend upon their vestries. Vestries sought out every vacant house or chamber within the parish and attempted to secure it, by lease or purchase, for the use of poor parishioners. Parishes also built tenements for the poor "over stables, in gardens and [in] other odd corners" and subdivided parish-owned houses. One survey of households in London in 1638 described an unnamed parish as having "allies stuf with poor whom they maintain."<sup>9</sup> St. Michael Cornhill leased one of its houses to a local family and requested that Mr. Maull, a pensioner, be allowed to inhabit a chamber in the garret. In return, the parish promised to alter the house for the convenience of the inhabitants.<sup>10</sup> St. Bartholomew Exchange put a chimney in the upper room of Anthony Hall's house and rented it to two women pensioners.<sup>11</sup> St. Dunstan in the East had "poor's houses" for which the parish poor paid a very low rent and for which there was a waiting list.<sup>12</sup>

Almshouses, an alternative to private housing, were believed by some to produce more idleness and poverty. The poor viewed the almshouses as insurance for their old age and so failed to provide for themselves when they might have done so.<sup>13</sup> Both St. Andrew Holborn and St. Bride Fleet Street had almshouses for the benefit



of ten and twelve poor parishioners respectively. By 1660 almshouses provided free permanent lodging to approximately 1,400 Londoners judged to be "permanently derelict through no fault of their own."<sup>14</sup>

Because each parish owned or leased much of the housing inhabited by its poor, it moved the poor from one place to another as housing availability dictated. If the pensioner had some income and could pay part of his rent, his lodgings were more convenient and comfortable. If his income fell and he became unable to pay the rent, tithe, and rates of his habitation, he was moved to a house or room of lesser value. Those who had no income lived in the least valuable or most dilapidated housing. Goody Chandler occupied a house until April 1644. Because she could no longer afford the annual rent of L8, the parish moved her to a chamber with a rent of only fifty shillings a year, most of which the parish paid. Eight years later she was moved to an upper chamber and garret and shared kitchen facilities with another woman pensioner.<sup>15</sup>

Medical care for the elderly and destitute also came under the purview of the vestry. Occasionally, someone needed special care and the family requested that the vestry find their relative a place in one of the hospitals such as Bedlam. St. James Garlickhithe placed a woman there in 1645. She must have been quite a problem to the parish because the vestry was willing to go to court to keep her there. Katherine Rumney, a maiden pensioner, often described as distressed, was twice placed in Bedlam at the expense of St. Bartholomew Exchange.<sup>16</sup> St. Botolph Billingsgate placed Stephen Pinder's boy in Christ's Hospital, while St. Bartholomew entered into bond with the president and governor of the hospital to remove three children at a certain age or when they were old enough to be apprenticed.<sup>17</sup> The parishes generally preferred to tend their parishioners at home, however. The cost of a hospital was high, and the parish could supply the needed care much more cheaply in the parish. Goodwife Gilbert of St. Pancras Soper Lane received a fifty-shilling gift from the parish and an allowance of two shillings a week for the woman who attended her. St. Botolph and St. Michael Cornhill each provided nurses to care for the elderly of the parish.<sup>18</sup> Other parishes provided money for visits to the doctor, including St. Bartholomew's great charge for Widow Hall "who fell down her stairs and broke her arm and bruised her head and body."<sup>19</sup>

The giving of pensions was part of the duty settled on the parish by the act of 1597. The system demanded that the overseers be in constant touch with the poor to assure that parish money was wisely distributed. Such oversight also assured the pensioner of not being forgotten during difficult times. The value of pensions varied according to need, rising in times of illness or other distress. Generally, it was believed that about L2 15s. per annum, or one shilling eight pence a week, was sufficient for a scant living for a completely impoverished family of London. Most pensions given by the parishes ranged from two pence to five shillings a week, with the average for one person being one shilling six pence each week or about L2 6s. 4d. each year. This compares favorably to the L2 15s. for the impoverished family just



mentioned.<sup>20</sup> The large and growing number of poor in London stretched each parish's resources to the limit. The death of one pensioner meant the vestry immediately received petitions from others for the unclaimed pension.<sup>21</sup> St. Bride Fleet Street claimed to spend about L800 each year "to the maintenance of our miserable poor which are betwixt seven and eight hundred families with Nursing of poor children and Orphans left upon our charge."<sup>22</sup>

All that was done for the poor might fall far short of the actual needs, so the vestry gave incidental alms from the poor box. Some income from gifts, church lands, and collections at lectures went into the box. The vestries of St. Botolph Billingsgate and St. Pancras Soper Lane turned money into the poor box from fines for misbehavior in vestry meetings.<sup>23</sup> Other monies were added when parishioners paid fines and gratuities for some service given by the vestry.<sup>24</sup> The amount in the poor box was seldom large, and the gifts given were small and towards pressing needs such as payment of a doctor's bill, food, clothing, or rent.

The children of a parish presented unique problems to the vestrymen. The youngsters often required aid, but their problems demanded unusual and complex solutions including a home, a nurse, an education and training in a livelihood. By mid-seventeenth century, most vestries had a well-organized system that included a number of London establishments and private citizens who cared for the children. While this placed a great expense on the parish, the money was well-spent if the children became self-sufficient adults. As early as 1536 those who framed poor laws recognized this economic truth and give the governors, justices of the peace, head officers and constables of each city, town or parish the authority

to take up all children between the ages of five and thirteen years who are begging or in idleness, and appoint them to masters in husbandry or other crafts to be taught, by which they may get their livings when they shall come of age.<sup>25</sup>

Children who were members of poor families received most of their aid from the parish through the gifts and pensions received by their parents. St. Michael Cornhill's vestry gave a pension to a widow and her two children. It also granted twelve pence a week to the grandchildren of a former beadle of Cornhill Ward.<sup>26</sup> While the parents lived and cared for their children, the parish did not interfere. But if the family unit began to disintegrate leaving children without proper care, the officers of the parish stepped in. The vestry of St. Botolph Billingsgate resolved to compel a father to support his two children.<sup>27</sup> The vestry of St. Bartholomew Exchange charged Widow Wheeler with not properly caring for her daughter and gave her the choice of leaving the parish or allowing the vestry to care for the child. The vestry placed Anne Wheeler with another family for the next seven years and paid for her support. Without such coercive power in the vestry, parents might have abandoned their children to the parish. Indeed, within ten years of the passage of the 1597 poor law, parents were perverting it "into a means of evading the natural duty of



parents to provide for their offspring.”<sup>28</sup>

For orphaned children, the vestries assumed possession of and appraised the goods of the deceased parents so the churchwardens could “manage all things for the good of the parish and children.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, it was the parish of St. Michael Cornhill that Mary and Abigail Waller petitioned to enquire into their deceased father’s estate. The parish assured the girls that they would each receive L5 when they reached twenty-one years of age or were married.<sup>30</sup>

Foundlings were often left in wealthier parishes where, it was believed, the infants received better care. The parish baptized the children and christened them using the name of the parish or street where each was found giving them such names as Elizabeth Bartholomew, Sarah Threadneedle, Sarah James or Elizabeth Pancras. St. Bartholomew Exchange listed each of its foundlings in the schedule of rates and allowed twenty pence a week for the support of each. As the child grew, the sum was increased.<sup>31</sup> This was a rather wealthy parish and not all foundlings in London were cared for with such liberality. According to the record of rates, St. Bartholomew cared for twenty-two foundlings from 1640 to 1662.

After christening the foundling, the vestry sent him to a nurse in the countryside where the environment was considered to be more healthful. St. Bartholomew Exchange sent children to nurses at Ware and Walton Stone. Some of the parish children of St. Botolph Billingsgate went to Lambeth, while St. Pancras Soper Lane sent children to a nurse at Shoreditch.<sup>32</sup> The vestries tried to supply each child with what he needed while he stayed with his nurse. St. Botolph listed in its churchwarden’s accounts the supplies taken to Goody Shott for one child: four pounds of soap, four pounds of candles, an upper coat, two pairs of sleeves, one blanket, three blue aprons, one pair of hose, eight clouts, one waist coat and linen.<sup>33</sup> Parishes also paid for medicine or a doctor’s care and usually paid a higher stipend to the nurse who cared for a sick child.<sup>34</sup>

The churchwardens or other vestrymen visited the children regularly to assure themselves that the nurse was providing an acceptable standard of care. During these visits the nurses received their wages and the vestrymen decided which of the children were ready to be apprenticed.<sup>35</sup> The churchwardens then chose a master or mistress and had the indenture drawn up binding the new apprentice to his master for a specified length of time, usually seven years, and paid the fees necessary for completing the agreement.<sup>36</sup>

Parishes also insisted that children of poor families be apprenticed to relieve the financial burden of the parish.<sup>37</sup> St. Bartholomew Exchange required Widow Conway to apprentice her two boys and one girl. This she did over a period of four years with the financial help of the parish. Her sons were apprenticed to a hat-band maker and a French tailor. Her daughter was apprenticed to a knitter.<sup>38</sup>



It is apparent that any parrish child, whether orphan, foundling, or poor, had at his disposal an organization that worked much as an extended family, providing all his needs from birth until death. In the parish he had a family, financial support, food, clothing, and training in a livelihood.

These examples of poor relief drawn from London parishes illustrate the great care with which vestries fulfilled their duties according to the act of 1597. Rates were imposed and collected; overseers of the poor were appointed; bequests and gifts were invested or spent as directed by the donors. The numerous and varied petitions of the poor to the vestry and their expectations that the parish poor relief still functioned. Some historians have proposed a general failure in the system of local relief because of the provision by London City government of hospitals, workhouses and prisons.<sup>39</sup> The City certainly supplemented parish resources by providing a number of corporate bodies that the parishes could never have successfully founded or funded. However, the low number of parish applications to these organizations indicates that while the parishes used them on occasion, it was of necessity or at a family's request and not in abrogation of their duty. While parts of the organization of poor relief suffered severe strain because of the Civil Wars and the increased number of poor, most vestry accounts show that, at the parish level, there was no failure of poor law administration even though Parliament gave virtually no direction on the subject until 1647.<sup>40</sup>

It has been suggested as well that parochial officials took advantage of their position to benefit themselves financially thereby diminishing the aid available to the poor.<sup>41</sup> It is true that some vestrymen abused their trust; an act of 1601 directed the correction of "misemployment of lands, tenements, rents, and annuities, . . . heretofore given to charitable uses."<sup>42</sup> But by mid-century several factors restrained abuses. The individual parish church had become a corporation that could be sued for malfeasance of funds. Furthermore, auditors scrutinized parish accounts annually and could require at law any offender to repair his financial indiscretions. At St. James Garlickhithe, the auditors questioned payments by a churchwarden to a solicitor, and at St. Bride Fleet Street they disallowed the miscellaneous expenses of Churchwarden Anyon.<sup>43</sup> In the handling of bequests, families often retained considerable control over the use of the endowment by the parish. In the Trevor bequest in St. Bride Fleet Street, the family even named the recipients of the income that issued from the bequest.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, the vestry enjoyed success as a dispenser of charity because of its general attitude towards the poor. Poverty was not a crime to be scornfully regarded. Within the congregations many agreed with a comment from an Anglican minister just prior to the Civil Wars.

Why may it not be thought and found true upon every man's self-examination, that such destitution, whenever it befalls a



child of God, is a punishment of some sin, which God in mercy sees fit to punish here, and not in another world?<sup>45</sup>

The vestry minutes never referred to those who accepted parish charity in a derogatory manner. When indiscriminate almsgiving increased the numbers and dependence of the poor, the lack of discrimination and control were censured, not the practice. It was recognized that timely assistance could save families from beggary and train children for productive lives.<sup>46</sup> The system proved its suitability to the situation by remaining unchanged in any major fashion until the early nineteenth century.

<sup>1</sup>For the history of the English poor laws, see George Nichols, **A History of the English Poor Law**, 3 vols. (London: P.S. King and Son, revised ed., 1904; reprint ed., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Pubs., 1967), I, 55-153.

<sup>2</sup>E. M. Leonard, **The Early History of English Poor Relief** (Cambridge: University Press, 1900; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1965), p. 29; Edwin Canaan, **The History of Local Rates in England** (London: P.S. King and Son, 1912), pp. 60-62; Nichols, **English Poor Law**, I, 151-53; Carl Bridenbaugh, **Vexed and Troubled Englishmen, 1590-1642** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 382.

<sup>3</sup>Guildhall Library Manuscripts 4887, fol. 510; 1175/1, no fol.

<sup>4</sup>GLMSS 943/1, fols. 94<sup>r</sup>, 95<sup>v</sup>; 4384/2, fols. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup>GLMSS 4813/1, fol. 79<sup>r</sup>; 4384/2, fol. 141.

<sup>6</sup>GLMSS 943/1, fol. 82; 4072/1, fols. 205<sup>r</sup>, 225<sup>v</sup>; 4384/2, fols. 99, 120-21, 141-284, passim; 6554/1, fols. 5<sup>v</sup>, 6<sup>v</sup>, 7<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>7</sup>GLMSS 5019/1, fol. 172; 4384/2, fols. 53, 61, 64; 4072/1, fol. 109<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>8</sup>GLMSS 4384/2, fols. 120-121, 142; 4072/1, fols. 205<sup>v</sup>-231<sup>v</sup>, passim.

<sup>9</sup>Bridenbaugh, **Vexed and Troubled Englishmen**, pp. 182-83.

<sup>10</sup>GLMS 4072/1, fols. 175<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>11</sup>GLMS 4384/2, fol. 28.

<sup>12</sup>GLMS 4887, fols. 511, 528, 544.

<sup>13</sup>Bridenbaugh, **Vexed and Troubled Englishmen**, p. 383. The act of 1597 made it possible for parishes to erect their own workhouses and almshouses. Nichols, **English Poor Law**, I, 185-86.

<sup>14</sup>Both of these almshouses served both men and women. W. K. Jordon, **The Charities of London, 1480-1660** (New York: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960; reprint ed., Archon Books, Hamden, Conn.: The Shoestring Press, Inc., 1974), pp. 162, 163, 195.

<sup>15</sup>GLMS 4384/2, fols. 26, 28, 171.



<sup>16</sup>GLMSS 4813/1, fol. 66<sup>r</sup>; 4384/2, fols. 192, 284.

<sup>17</sup>GLMSS 943/1, fols. 87<sup>v</sup>, 95<sup>v</sup>; 4384/1, fols. 525-527; vol. 2, fols. 119-20, 217.

<sup>18</sup>GLMSS 5019/1, fols. 154, 156, 210; 943/1, fol. 94<sup>v</sup>; 4072/1, fol. 219<sup>r</sup>. Widows often served as nurses in the parish saving the vestries considerable expense. GLMSS 4887, fols. 502, 511; 943/1, fol. 93<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>19</sup>GLMS 4384/2, fols. 138, 289.

<sup>20</sup>Jordan, *Charities*, p. 134; GLMSS 4384/2, fol. 180; 4072/1, fols. 171<sup>v</sup>-208<sup>r</sup>, passim.

<sup>21</sup>GLMS 4887, fols. 489, 502, 519.

<sup>22</sup>T. C. Dale, ed., *The Inhabitants of London in 1638* (London, 1931), p. 201.

<sup>23</sup>GLMSS 943/1, fols. 85<sup>v</sup>, 86<sup>r-v</sup>; 5019/1, fol. 86.

<sup>24</sup>GLMSS 4813/1, fol. 113<sup>r</sup>; 4072/1, fol. 222<sup>v</sup>; 4384/2, fol. 125. Parliament ordered collections taken on days of public humiliation to be used for the relief of the poor. *Journals of the House of Commons*, IV, 727. William Edward Tate, *The Parish Chest* (Cambridge: University Press, 1951; reprint ed., 1960), p. 197. GLMSS 4887, fol. 515; 4384/2, fol. 100.

<sup>25</sup>Nichols, *English Poor Law*, I, 124, citing 27 Hen. VIII., c. 25 (1535-36).

<sup>26</sup>GLMS 4072/1, fols. 169<sup>r</sup>, 183<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>27</sup>GLMS 943/1, fol. 84<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>28</sup>GLMS 4384/2, fols. 101, 108-9, 117, 254-55; Nichols, *English Poor Law*, I, 230.

<sup>29</sup>GLMS 1175/1, no fol.

<sup>30</sup>GLMS 4072/1, fols. 186<sup>v</sup>, 187<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>31</sup>The rate for foundlings was most often listed with that for pensioners. Both were entered in the minutes in March or April of each year. GLMS 4384/1-2, passim.

<sup>32</sup>GLMSS 4384/2, fols. 100, 281, 321; 943/1, fol. 86<sup>r</sup>; 5019/1, fol. 181.

<sup>33</sup>GLMS 942A, fol. 35<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>34</sup>GLMSS 5019/1, fol. 189; 4384/2, fols. 272, 348.

<sup>35</sup>GLMSS 4384/2, fol. 257; 4072/1, fol. 219<sup>r</sup>; 4887, fols. 515, 542; 943/1, fol. 89<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>36</sup>GLMSS 6554/1, fol. 7<sup>v</sup>; 4384/2, fols. 89, 106-7.

<sup>37</sup>The following entries represent gifts of money ranging from forty shillings to L5 to the parents of children who were to be apprenticed. GLMSS 4072/1, fol. 171<sup>v</sup>; 4887, fol. 548; 3579, fol. 90; 943/1, fol. 92<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>38</sup>GLMS 4384/2, fols. 106-7, 152, 156-57, 162, 191.

<sup>39</sup>Margaret James, *Social Problems and Policy during the Puritan Revolution, 1640-1660* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), pp. 196-98.



<sup>40</sup>In 1647 the House of Lords required the Lord Mayor to "put into execution the laws concerning the poor and rogues," Leonard, **Poor Relief**, p. 270. Other bills for the relief of the poor were considered by Parliament. While that body was debating, the vestries continued their work. If poor law administration broke down at all, it appears to have been at the Parliamentary level where the problem was debated repeatedly and the only solution was to direct the local authorities to continue the work they were already performing.

<sup>41</sup>James, **Social Problems**, pp. 248-49; Leonard, **Poor Relief**, p. x.

<sup>42</sup>Tate, **Parish Chest**, p. 109.

<sup>43</sup>GLMSS 4813/1, fol. 91<sup>r</sup>; 6554/1, fol. 7<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>44</sup>In 1644 Frances Lady Trevor left £100 to the parish to maintain six poor women. During his lifetime her husband selected the recipients of the gift. GLMS 6554/1, fols. 4<sup>r</sup>, 6<sup>r</sup>, 8<sup>v</sup>, 11<sup>r</sup>. See also Alice E. McCampbell "Studies in London Parish History 1640-1660" (Ph. D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1975), p. 25.

<sup>45</sup>Timothy Breen, "The Non-Existant Controversy: Puritan and Anglican Attitudes on Work and Wealth, 1600-1640," **Church History** 35 (September 1966): 281. Breen's findings vary from those of James. However James's comments are concerned more with Puritan influence on attitudes towards wealth and poverty during the Commonwealth when there was "a growing disposition to regard poverty as a crime and disgrace." James, **Social Problems**, p. 18.

<sup>46</sup>St. Pancras Soper Lane gives a glimpse into the life of an adult who had once been a foundling in the parish. William Pancras became an established member of his community and was able to take orphaned William Augur as his apprentice. GLMS 5019/1, fol. 162.



## B. O. DUNCAN, NEWBERRY UNIONIST

Thomas H. Pope

Newberry's delegation to the Constitutional Convention of 1868 was undistinguished but interesting. It consisted of a white political dilettante, B. O. Duncan, and two ex-slaves, James Henderson and Lee Nance, all of whom lived in Newberry District before the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> The delegation included no carpetbaggers and no scalawags which perhaps made it somewhat different from most other delegations.

Baruch Odell Duncan was descended from one of the pioneer families which settled on the waters of the Enoree River about 1750. Duncan's Creek, in lower Laurens and upper Newberry Counties, gets its name from his ancestor, the pioneer John Duncan. His parents, Baruch and Pianah McCrackin Duncan, were well-to-do landowners. He was born in Newberry District on July 5, 1835, and was graduated from Furman University in 1858. Robert Daniel's history of Furman lists him as B. O. Duncan of Newberry, while C. C. Brown's **General Catalog of Furman University** lists him as Barnett Odell Duncan; the family Bible of Baruch Duncan gives his correct name and the date of his birth.<sup>2</sup>

After graduation, Duncan studied at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin and in Paris. He became proficient in German and in French. When the war clouds gathered, Duncan made it clear that he was a Unionist and that he would remain one.<sup>3</sup> His brother Thaddeus volunteered and served honorably in the Confederate Army throughout the War.<sup>4</sup>

In 1862, B. O. Duncan accepted the appointment of consul for the United States of America for the Rhenish Palatinate of Bavaria.<sup>5</sup> Later he was consul at Karlsruhe for the Grand Duchy of Baden. He remained in the consular service until 1866 when he was removed by President Johnson.<sup>6</sup>

Returning to Newberry after eight years' absence in Europe he immediately began to take part in the reorganization of the government. Although a sincere Unionist he was ambitious for office.

In March, 1867, he urged, in a letter to **The Newberry Herald**, that a convention be called to establish full and complete equality of the races and called upon Major L. J. Jones, prominent local lawyer, to persuade Governor Orr to issue the call for the convention.<sup>7</sup> He also corresponded with Orr himself.<sup>8</sup>

In July 1867, Duncan attended the organizational meeting of the Union Republican Party in Columbia. The other four representatives from Newberry were Negroes, one of them being James Henderson. The Convention adopted a resolution calling for the division and sale of unoccupied lands. Although firmly committed to equality of the races, Duncan was still a conservative who expected to inherit land. He rebelled against this action and asked the President of the Union



Republican Party of South Carolina, R. H. Gleaves, to remove his name from the party roll. Gleaves accepted, stating that he was glad the Convention had such a platform that no Judas could remain.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, Henderson and the other Newberry delegates did remain. Although Duncan's letter to Gleaves had been published, he felt that his position required further explanation. He accordingly wrote a long letter to the editors of **The Newberry Herald** in which he stated his belief that "the only safety for the country is to form a party based on the principles of the Civil Rights and Reconstruction Bills." He chided men of moderate views for not participating in the organization of the Republican Party, and urged that only men with "their eyes open to the spirit and necessities of the times, would be able to rescue us from the dangers now threatening."<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile General Sickles, Military Commander of South Carolina, had issued orders providing for the registration of voters in the state. The registration was completed in October 1867 and showed 1131 white and 2251 black voters in Newberry District.<sup>11</sup> In November an election was held to determine whether a Constitutional Convention should be held. The white people generally abstained from voting in the hope that they could thereby prevent a convention. No convention would be held unless a majority of the registered voters participated and unless a majority of those participating voted in favor of a convention. However a majority did vote, and of course most of those who did voted for the convention.<sup>12</sup>

An election was then held for delegates after which General E. R. S. Canby, successor to General Sickles as Military Commander of the Second District (North and South Carolina), issued General Order No. 160 on December 18, 1867, calling for the Constitutional Convention to meet in Charleston on January 14, 1868.

In its issue of January 13, 1868, **The Charleston Daily News** reported that B. O. Duncan had registered at the Mills House. Apparently he was not accompanied by his bride, the former Mary S. Dillard of Laurens District, whom he had married on November 7, 1867.<sup>13</sup> The newspaper did not report where James Henderson and Lee Nance, Duncan's colleagues from Newberry, were staying.

When the Convention was organized Duncan was put on the Committee to draft the legislative part of the Constitution, while Henderson was put on the Committee to draft the Bill of Rights and Nance on the Committee on Petitions.<sup>14</sup> Later Duncan was named to the Committee of Nine to prepare a mode of submitting the Constitution to the people for ratification.<sup>15</sup>

The three Newberry delegates received a bad press after they voted to exclude the reporter of **The Charleston Mercury** from the floor, and after they voted to invalidate all contracts whose consideration was the purchase of slaves.<sup>16</sup>



The **Newberry Herald** of February 19, 1868, reprinted an article appearing in **The Charleston Mercury** in which Duncan and Henderson were described in uncomplimentary terms. Lee Nance was described as being about thirty-eight years of age, stoutly built, active, industrious, sober, respectful and good looking. Born on the plantation of Drayton Nance he had the fullest confidence of that family and was regarded as truthful, honest and singularly free from the lower vices. He advocated a "Conservative" policy according to the newspaper and was credited with more than average intelligence.

The other two did not receive any compliments. Henderson, who was born in slavery in Virginia, and who was brought from Augusta, Georgia, to Newberry some years before the War, was said to be the most intelligent member of the delegation but accused of being glib of tongue and dexterous of fingers. His opinions were said to extend to subjugation of the white race, the confiscation of white property, and the disfranchisement of white Southern men.

The paper's real sarcasm was saved for Duncan, who was called "Saint Odell," and described as being tall, slim, red-headed and red bearded, and dull. He was said to speak a "Dutchy" English and to see through glasses darkly. No credit was given to him for his sincerity of purpose nor for his courage to state publicly his despised views before, during and after the War.

Actually Duncan and Dr. Albert Gallatin Mackey, President of the Convention, were the only South Carolina white members of the Convention who could not be termed "scalawags." They had remained Unionists throughout the War. Duncan had rejected succession openly and had refused to fight his section's battles. He demonstrated courage in refusing to accept party platform which advocated the seizure and division of unoccupied lands. He erred, as did James L. Orr, in thinking that he could persuade men who detested his views to follow him into the Republican Party.

Governor Orr delivered a statesmanlike address to the Convention when it convened. For once he spoke from his heart rather than with any eye to his own future. Rather courageously he stated:<sup>17</sup>

The fact cannot be disguised, however, that the white population has almost unanimously abstained from exercising the privilege (of voting), and your Convention is, therefore, strictly speaking, the representative only of the colored population of South Carolina. This being the case, it cannot be denied that the intelligence, refinement and wealth of the State is not represented by your body. ...

Orr urged the convention to write a Constitution under which all men, white and black, could live in peace and with dignity. He urged that every man in the State be



allowed to vote without any disability in electing the first legislature, and that after January 1, 1870, no man be permitted to vote unless he could read and write; that a liberal homestead law be enacted; that imprisonment for debt be abolished; that relief be given debtors for debts contracted before the War; that all existing debts founded upon the purchase of slaves be wiped out; that provision be made to educate the colored people; and that the obligations of the State be fully redeemed.

According to the **Proceedings of the Convention**, neither Henderson nor Nance made a speech, offered an amendment, or made a motion. While Duncan was not one of the leaders, he nevertheless took an active part in some of the important deliberations of the Convention. He served on the Committee to divide the state into Congressional Districts and on the Committee to prescribe a mode in which the Constitution should be submitted for ratification and to provide for the election of state officers.<sup>18</sup>

Duncan opposed the provision that the General Assembly provide for compulsory attendance of all school children between the ages of six and sixteen.<sup>19</sup> He made a prophetic speech against the article which proposed to require all schools and colleges to be open and free to all youths without regard to race, color, or previous condition.

In part he said:

If we begin by educating the masses, we end by overcoming our prejudices. But if we begin by attempting to overcome their prejudices by force, and educating them afterwards, I am convinced that the whole plan will result in a failure.

Now, what is likely to be the result of obtaining this section, and thereby opening the schools to all? Simply that they would be attended only by the colored children. If the attempt is made to enforce a mixture in this way, I have no idea that fifty white children in the State would attend the public schools. The freedmen's schools are now, if I mistake not, open to all; and yet I believe not one white pupil in the State attends them. ...

Again, in attempting to enforce mixed schools, you bring trouble, quarreling, and wrangling into every neighborhood.  
...

Gentlemen, this is too serious a question, to the peace and welfare of the country, for me not to speak out plainly the dangers before us. ...



Let us simply strike out the section, and leave the whole matter to the Legislature. ...<sup>20</sup>

The Special Committee of which Duncan was a member recommended that an election be held on April 14, 15, and 16, 1868, at which time the Constitution would be ratified or rejected.<sup>21</sup> At the same time the electors should vote for Governor and the other State officers as well as for members of the General Assembly and of the United States House of Representatives. The Convention adopted this plan, which also provided for elections to be held in each county for all county officers required by the Constitution to be elected by the people; these county elections were to be held within thirty days after ratification of the Constitution.<sup>22</sup>

The Constitution as adopted by the Convention included a Declaration of Rights declaring the indissolubility of the Union, the equality of all men, the prohibition of slavery, and the paramount allegiance due the Constitution and Government of the United States. The article on the legislative department changed the old judicial districts to counties, abolished dual office-holding (which had been permitted under former Constitutions), and gave Newberry County a Senator and three House members.

The Governor and the other State Administrative Officers were to be elected by the people. A Supreme Court of three members serving six year terms was established; equity and law courts were combined; counties were to be organized into judicial circuits; a circuit judge for each circuit judges was to be elected by the General Assembly for a four year term; a Probate Judge was to be elected by the people in each county for a four year term; circuit judges were to be rotated among the various circuits; and justices of the peace were to be elected by the voters.

A board of county commissioners was to be elected in each county for a two year term. The board was to have jurisdiction over roads, ferries and bridges; in all matters relating to taxes; and in all disbursements of public funds. Thus the power so long jealously guarded by the General Assembly over county matters was vested in a local board.

In education the Constitution provided for a school commissioner in each county. The county commissioners, with the State Superintendent of Education, comprised the State Board of Education. A free public school system was established and school districts were set up. The General Assembly was to levy an annual school tax and was required to prescribe compulsory school attendance for youth between six and sixteen.

The militia was to consist of able-bodied males between eighteen and forty-five except for those exempt by law. Women were given separate property rights and their property was not to be liable for the debts of their husbands. Divorce was to be permitted.



With an eye to appeasing the land hunger of those recently given their freedom, the Convention adopted an Ordinance creating a Board of Land Commissioners and providing for the purchase of land and its sale to actual settlers. One condition of the sales was to be that one-half of the tract purchased would be placed under cultivation within three years.<sup>23</sup>

On the whole the Constitution was a moderate one, modeled in large part on those of the Northern states. South Carolina was to live under it for almost thirty years and then to keep many of its features in the Constitution of 1895.

During the convention Duncan was looking ahead to public office. Spoken of as a possible choice for Secretary of State in February,<sup>24</sup> a month later he was regarded as a leading candidate for Congress from the Third Congressional District. On March 12, 1868 however, his hopes were dashed when the Congressional Caucus selected Simeon Corley as the Republican candidate for congress over Duncan. Several ballots were required before the nominee was chosen.<sup>25</sup> The blow was softened somewhat by Duncan's election as a delegate to the National Republican Convention to be held in Chicago.<sup>26</sup>

Newberry voted overwhelmingly in favor of ratification. The Republicans cast 2045 votes and the Democrats only 815 votes in Newberry County; 2049 voted in favor of ratification, and 803 against.<sup>27</sup>

General Robert K. Scott, carpetbagger from Ohio, was elected Governor, and Lemuel Boozer of Lexington was elected Lieutenant Governor. The Newberry legislative delegation consisted of Charles W. Montgomery, scalawag, as Senator; Joseph D. Boston, James Hutson, and James Henderson, Negroes, as representatives.<sup>28</sup>

The General Assembly held a special session in July 1868. That month B. O. Duncan wrote to Governor Scott that he had heard that Mr. Parker was not able to give bond to qualify as State Treasurer and that he "would be willing to accept the position at least temporarily"--provided he did not succeed to Frederick Sawyer's position as Collector of Customs. Duncan expressed the hope that all elements of the Republican Party would forget their differences and work harmoniously, and he urged the necessity for securing fair and impartial elections.<sup>29</sup>

By November Duncan was alarmed at the turn of events. He again wrote Governor Scott, this time protesting that he did not want "to see my old neighbors and friends afflicted by incompetent men in office, and my party disgraced for appointing men whose honesty even was suspected, but of whose entire want of respectability or capacity there could not be the least doubt." He predicted that the Republican party could not continue to be successful unless it could draw respectable, intelligent and patriotic elements of the white population into its ranks.<sup>30</sup> His plea fell on deaf ears.



In June, 1869, Duncan wrote Scott a final letter endorsing Dr. Peter Moon and John Spearman for appointment as magistrates. In it he decried the political claims of others who sought the positions.<sup>31</sup> Again he was unsuccessful.

In June 1869, Duncan, unsuccessful in his quest for high office and disgusted with affairs at home, accepted appointment as consul in Naples. He remained in the consular service until 1883 when he refused to go to Catania as consul.<sup>32</sup>

While abroad he continued his interest in South Carolina's governmental affairs. He wrote Lewis Duckett, well-to-do black farmer, that he was in favor of reform and hoped that every honest man would vote for Carpenter in the gubernatorial campaign of 1870. His letter was printed in the local paper.<sup>33</sup>

In 1872 he was so disgusted with the worsening situation in South Carolina that he wrote categorically that he "would under no circumstances support any man or party that would aid directly or indirectly the detestable scoundrels who at present control the Radical party in South Carolina."<sup>34</sup>

He admired D. H. Chamberlain, however, and wrote letters in his behalf to the newspapers of South Carolina during the campaign of 1876.<sup>35</sup> His friendship with Chamberlain continued over the years as Chamberlain's biographer Walter Allen mentions in his book.<sup>36</sup>

When he left the consular service he returned to Newberry where he spent most of the rest of his life. He continued to write letters to the newspapers and to take an active interest in the Republican Party. He was the Republican candidate for Secretary of State and Elector at Large on the Republican ticket in 1896.<sup>37</sup>

He died on April 1, 1900. B. O. Duncan was a minor figure in the history of South Carolina but he was a man who was true to his principles and who had the courage of his convictions.

In reporting his death, **The Newberry Observer** stated:

"Mr. Duncan was a man of intellectual culture. He was an incessant reader, and no man in Newberry was better posted on current events or political affairs, and his general store of knowledge was cyclopedic in character and variety. As a writer he was forcible and clear. He contributed largely to the highest class of the periodicals of the day, and his articles mostly on economic questions, found ready acceptance. As a citizen, he acted according to his conviction of duty, and was quiet, honest and inoffensive."<sup>38</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina, Held at Charleston, S. C., beginning January 14th and Ending March 17, 1868, Charleston, S. C., 1868, pp. 7-8 (hereafter **Proceedings**).

<sup>2</sup>Robert N. Daniels, **Furman University, A History**, Greenville, S.C., 1951, p. 205. C.C. Brown, **General Catalog of Furman University, 1852-1899**, Sumter, S.C., no date, p. 30. Family Bible of Baruch Duncan; Photocopies of entries relating to family members in possession of author.

<sup>3</sup>Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 30: **The Charleston Daily News**, March 9, 1868.

<sup>4</sup>**The [Newberry] Observer**, April 28, 1908.

<sup>5</sup>**The Charleston Daily News**, March 9, 1868.

<sup>6</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>7</sup>**The Newberry Herald**, March 20, 1867.

<sup>8</sup>Correspondence of Governor James L. Orr, South Carolina Archives, includes letter from Duncan dated March 14, 1867, with notation that Orr sent Duncan's letter to W. H. Trescott of the **Daily News** for publication. Box 6, Folder 30. No copy of **The Charleston Daily News** of March 1867 is extant in South Carolina.

<sup>9</sup>**The Newberry Herald**, July 31, 1867.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, August 28, 1867.

<sup>11</sup>**The Charleston Daily News**, November 22 and December 2, 1867.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, December 2, 1867; thirty white and 1939 blacks voted for the Convention while eleven votes were cast against it.

<sup>13</sup>Family Bible of Baruch Duncan.

<sup>14</sup>**Proceedings**, p. 56; **The Charleston Daily News**, January 21, 1868.

<sup>15</sup>**Proceedings**, p. 577.

<sup>16</sup>**The Charleston Daily News**, January 30 and February 4, 1868.

<sup>17</sup>**Proceedings**, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 266 and 577.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 655.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 889-893.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 771-772.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 807.

<sup>23</sup>**Statutes at Large**, XIV, 33.

<sup>24</sup>**The Charleston Daily News**, February 17, 1868.

<sup>25</sup>**The Newberry Herald**, March 18, 1868.



<sup>26</sup>**Idem.**

<sup>27</sup>**Ibid.**, April 22 and 29, 1868.

<sup>28</sup>**Journal of the Senate**, Special Session of 1868, p. 9; **Journal of the House**, Special Session of 1868, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup>Correspondence of Governor Robert K. Scott, South Carolina Archives, includes letter from Duncan dated July 19, 1868, Box 1, Folder 20.

<sup>30</sup>Correspondence of Governor Scott, Box 3, Folder 39.

<sup>31</sup>Correspondence of Governor Scott, Box 7, Folder 44.

<sup>32</sup>**The Newberry Herald**, June 23, 1869; National Archives, records of Department of State.

<sup>33</sup>**The Newberry Herald**, October 19, 1870.

<sup>34</sup>**Ibid.**, June 12, 1872.

<sup>35</sup>**Ibid.**, November 8, 1876.

<sup>36</sup>Walter Allen, **Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina: A Chapter of Reconstruction in the Southern States**, New York and London, 1888, pp. 419-421 and 505-506.

<sup>37</sup>**The Newberry Herald**, September 23, 1896.

<sup>38</sup>**The Newberry Observer**, April 5, 1900.



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